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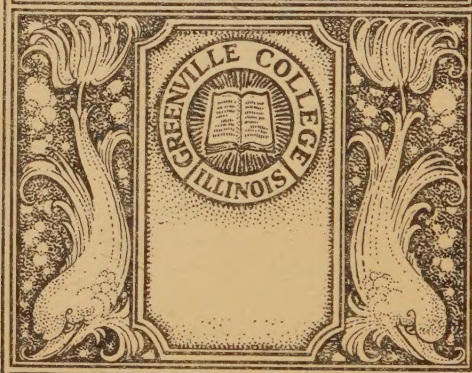

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THE

EARLY YEARS

OF

CHRISTIANITY.

BY E. DE PRESSENSÉ, D.D.,

AUTHOR OF "JESUS CHRIST: HIS TIMES, LIFE, AND WORK."

TRANSLATED BY ANNIE HARWOOD.

HERESY AND CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THIS Volume—"Heresy and Christian Doctrine," now introduced for the first time to the English public, is the third in a consecutive series, intended to present a complete picture, from the Author's point of view, of the spiritual life and history of the Church during the first three centuries of the Christian era. The two previous volumes—"Early Years of Christianity" and "Martyrs and Apologists"—delineated chiefly the extensive growth of the Church and its conflicts with enemies without. The present volume treats rather of its intensive development and the history of its doctrines.

The concluding volume of the series will appear simultaneously in English and in French. The recent pressure of political, in addition to pastoral duties, has prevented Dr. Pressensé, as yet, from arranging his accumulated materials for this work. He has, however, engaged to prepare it for publication with the least possible delay.

ANNIE HARWOOD.

GREAT SHELFORD, CAMBRIDGE
December 10th, 1872.

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THE

EARLY YEARS OF CHRISTIANITY.

History of Heresy and Dogma.

BOOK FIRST—HERESY.

CHAPTER I.

GNOSTICISM.

(a) The General Characteristics of Gnosticism.

In the two preceding volumes of this work we have described the great conflicts of the Church of Christ during the first three centuries of our era. The history of primitive Christianity is the history of a desperate struggle between the old world and the new faith just cradled in Judæa. This warfare was not confined to any one sphere; it was universal. Persecution was the first and inevitable manifestation of this deadly hostility. Not only was the new religion opposed to all the constituent principles of Pagan society, and repugnant to the prejudices of degenerate Judaism, but it was essentially an aggressive and victorious power. It was not content to be an alien in the midst of the brilliant and corrupt civilisation into which it was born, and to pass upon it only the silent con-

demnation of its own pure presence; it lifted up its voice in protest against its vileness and deceptive lustre. It did not merely refuse to offer incense to the idol; it unmasked the false god and denounced the abominations of the idol-worship.

The humblest of its representatives was a witness for Christ—His soldier, His missionary. In all places and in all seasons Christianity carried on a mission, ever active and aggressive. Between it and the ancient world the opposition was radical and absolute. Doubtless, on the part of the Christians, all was gentleness and resignation, but this very gentleness under the fire of persecution, had the effect of an irritating provocation in a society, the only recognised basis of which was violence. Martyrdom, blending sublime resignation with unconquerable fidelity, was the holy challenge of the soul to brute force, and the fiercest resistance would have been better tolerated than this triumphant weakness, which revealed the indomitable energy of conscience.

This terrible conflict, which lasted for three centuries, we have traced through its various phases, till the day when the sword fell from the hand of the persecutors.* But the struggle was not confined to arenas and torture-prisons; it was carried on also in the domain of thought. Paganism assailed Christian doctrine by all the voices at its command—by popular clamour, by public calumny, by the sarcasms of fine satirists like Lucian, by the formal philosophy of a Celsus and a Porphyry. Nay, it even

* See "Martyrs and Apologists." The great conflict between Christianity and Paganism.

devised new systems, by which it sought to vanquish the Gospel with its own weapons, borrowing from it the methods for the assault. We have endeavoured to reproduce the learned and eloquent replies to these various assailants, which were presented by the Christian apology of the first ages, as it found exponents at Carthage, at Alexandria, and at Rome.

We have now to deal with more dangerous and treacherous attacks, those, namely, of heresy, which added, as it were, the perils of intestine and civil war to these formidable assaults from without. In reality, the enemy is always the same, but more subtle and disguised; the adversary is still the ancient world, but now the attempt is to stifle the new religion by embracing it. If Christianity could not release itself from this deadly clasp, it was, indeed, doomed, for it would have lost that which constituted its essence and vital principle. I know that some question our right thus to characterise the tendencies which were so keenly combated by the early Fathers. The very name of heresy is regarded as an attack levelled at liberty of conscience and of thought. We cannot share these scruples, the logical issue of which must be to deprive Christianity of all distinctive character.

Doubtless, in subsequent times, when the Church—transformed into a hierarchy, and incorporated with the Empire—committed to the civil power the guardianship of her creed, the designation *heresy* acquired a new import; it was the dictum of an arbitrary, often tyrannical authority, and too often carried in its train forcible and material repression. But this was not the

case in the period preceding the great Councils, when no civil penalties were attached to spiritual errors. The Church was then a free association; and it was open to any, without detriment, to separate from it. The argument against error was enforced only by moral and intellectual suasion. One uniform type of doctrine had not yet been produced; secondary differences found free expression in the East and West; theology was not fettered by invariable formulas. If, in the midst of this diversity, we still discover a common basis of faith, we must surely regard this, not as a system composed and formulated by the authority of a school, but as the faith itself, in its truest instinct and most spontaneous manifestation. If this same unanimity, which is apparent in the essentials of the faith, is also displayed in the repudiation of certain other influences, may we not fairly conclude that those influences were in flagrant controversion of the fundamental principles of Christianity? This presumption becomes a certainty if we recognise, in the doctrine thus universally rejected by the Church, the characteristic features of one of the religions of the past. It is impossible to maintain that Gnosticism and Ebionitism are legitimate forms of Christian thought, unless we are prepared to admit that Christian thought has no individuality, no specific character by which it may be recognised. Otherwise, under pretext of giving it greater breadth, it is reduced to a nullity. No one, in the time of Plato, would have dared to attach his name to any doctrine which would have been incompatible with the theory of ideas, and anyone would have excited the just ridicule of Greece, who should have spoken of Epicurus or of Zeno as a

disciple of the Academy. Let us admit then, that if there exists a religion or doctrine known as Christianity, the existence of heresies in connection with it is a necessary possibility.

The word heresy has properly a very noble meaning, since it signifies free choice applied to a doctrine.

From the first the new religion was called a heresy by the Jews,* who were accustomed to designate by this name various parties or divers sects. To the orthodoxy of the synagogue indeed, Christianity could not but seem worthy of excommunication, since it assailed its very vital principle. The Apostles applied the same designation to the tendencies which, whether from the Jewish point of view or from that of Pagan speculation, impinged upon and imperilled the true faith in Jesus Christ.† The Fathers used the word heresy in the same manner. We, like them, must understand it to apply to doctrines which, upon some capital point, are in direct contradiction to primitive Christianity. In the second and third centuries, heresy is always a reaction, either in the direction of Judaism or Paganism. Thus it carries on, in an inner and more vital sphere, the same conflict which was waged between the Gospel and the ancient world, in the realms of fact and of thought. The Pagan reaction was by far the most important. The heresy which sprang from Judaism was a timid and insignificant thing, or, at least, was far outweighed and outrun by the heresy which was born of Paganism. The latter therefore will claim our first attention.‡ We have already indicated its

* Acts xxiv. 14. † Gal. v. 20; Titus iii. 10.

‡ The principal books of reference for the study of Gnosticism

obscure beginnings in the portion of this book devoted to the Apostolic age. In the second century, it emerges from the formative period as a great school, and sets up its own altar in opposition to that of primitive Christianity. The time is come for us to characterise this important spiritual movement, so rife with perils to the Church.

However numerous the schools into which Gnosticism is divided, it has one dominant trait, which is never effaced, and which is sufficiently indicated by its very name. The term *knowledge* occurs in the writings of the Apostles, but it there designates simply the more profound apprehension of Christian truth.* In the Epistle of Barnabas it acquires a sense more nearly allied to the new meaning, which became attached to it in the second century, for it there represents an allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament, superseding the literal import.† It is but a step beyond this to the daring speculation which

are: 1st. The writings of Irenæus, Epiphanius, and Theodoret ("De Hæretic. Fabulis") against heresies. 2nd. The writings of the Fathers, and primarily those of the Alexandrine Fathers. Eusebius' History is very important, because of its quotations. 3rd. The "Philosophoumena" (Ed. Dunker and Schneidewin, Göttingen, 1855), in which we find, for the first time, the genuine text of Basilides and Valentinus. This is a document of the first moment, to which we shall constantly refer. 4th. The "Pistis Sophia," a sort of Gnostic poem, recently discovered (Ed. Petermann, Berlin, 1853). 5th. Among modern writings, beside the general histories of the Church and of doctrine from which we may quote, we refer to Neander's monograph, "Genetische Entwickel. der Vornehmst. Gnostisch. Systeme," 1818, the remarkable essay of his disciple Rossel, published in his posthumous works ("Theol. Schrift.," Berlin, 1847); Baur's great book, "Die Christliche Gnosis," Tubingen, 1835; and "l'Histoire Critique du Gnosticisme," by M. Matter, 1828-1845. All these works of reference are inadequate, because so many new sources have been opened up.

* 1 Cor. viii. 1; 2 Cor. viii. 7. † "Ep. Barnab.," chap. ii. ix. x.

arbitrarily tampers with the texts. The tendency of Gnosticism is always to make the element of knowledge predominate over that of the moral life; it changes religion into theosophy. If it had confined itself to seeking the satisfaction of the intellectual faculties by the searching study of revelation, the attempt would have been perfectly justifiable. Christianity is not a religion that stultifies the mental faculties; on the contrary, it gives a powerful impetus to thought, and enlarges its domain by opening to it the realm of the infinite, the invisible, the divine; and if the mind is indeed overwhelmed by truths which are as high above its grasp as the heavens are above the earth, it sinks only under the weight of unsearchable riches. Faith leads to knowledge, for it is not possible that the whole nature of the man—head, heart, and conscience—should not strive to apprehend the divine object of his faith. There is a genuine Christian knowledge, which has taken an important part in the development of the Church; theology is the very knowledge which, according to Apostolic precept, is to be added to faith. But, in order to preserve its true character, it must never be allowed to become pure speculation, or to fall into the esoterism which makes its doctrines a mystery to all but the select initiate. Christianity is a divine manifestation, a free and sovereign intervention of God in history; it is a fact before it is an idea; its history is the basis of its system. It is a positive rather than a theoretical religion,—a glorious remedy for a desperate evil, a grand restoration. On the awful reality of the Fall, it rears the sublime reality of Redemption. Hence its

eminently moral character; it moves in the living sphere of free and personal influences, over which logic has no rigid or restrictive power. It starts with the statement of great facts, which are not the product of a syllogism, since liberty, whether in God or man, eludes the restraints of reasoning, and by its very essence reveals itself as a spontaneous force. This moral and historical character of Christianity is just that which brings it within the reach of all men, whatever their diversities of intellectual culture, since it makes its appeal primarily to the heart and conscience—to that which is fundamental and universal in the soul. This is the key to that grand and triumphant exclamation of Jesus: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes." A religion which should be for the wise and thoughtful only, would be but an abstract speculation, fit to delight the finer spirits capable of rising to those rarefied heights; it would be no divine manifestation, coming within the grasp, or commending itself to the direct intuition of the human heart, whether that heart beat in hut or palace, under the peasant's smock or the philosopher's mantle. Jesus Christ might well glory in the divine popularity of His teaching, for this was a fact entirely new. Until He came, every system which had been raised above the gross superstitions of Paganism, had been only an abstract and obscure philosophy, reserved for a little company of disciples.

It was this eclecticism which the teaching of the Gnostics sought to revive in the Church. Knowledge

was with them everything; Christianity, therefore, was a matter of knowledge, a science reserved to the initiate. This was a complete inversion of the Gospel method, and involved far more than an exclusive predominance granted to one element over another. In truth, religion cannot be transformed into a rigid science, except by laying at its basis the fatalistic conception of the universe. If everything is regulated by, and transpires according to inflexible laws, we have but to learn the construction of the machine, and the place in it assigned to us. But if, on the contrary, there exists a moral world, if the divine freedom appeals to the human, knowledge is comparatively insignificant; obedience, surrender, is the essential. Assuredly, the opposition between these two conceptions of religion is absolute; it is, in truth, the opposition between the fatalistic speculation of Pagan naturalism, and the free and living faith of a true religion.

Thus we see that by its exclusively intellectual tendency, Gnosticism abandons the noble banner of Christian spirituality, and returns to the dualism which was the curse of the ancient world. We shall observe how faithful it was to its principle, and with what often treacherous art it revived the old errors which had brought to ruin the most brilliant civilisation of the world. From this primary and purely speculative character, there resulted the haughty esoterism which reconstituted the aristocracy of intellect, and placed its barrier in the way of the young and the simple-hearted. It was found, in the end, that this privilege turned to the detriment of those who gloried

in it, for the rare fruit which they had thus strained upwards to gather from the topmost branches of the tree of science, proved but a dry husk in their hands. Better a thousand times the homely bread broken so freely to the multitudes who gathered round the feet of Christ!

The predominance of the intellectual and speculative element in Gnosticism, must not, however, lead us to conceive of it as a mere philosophical school, at least in the modern meaning of that term. It is erroneous to regard it as simply a philosophy of religion.* Such a conception belongs to later modes of thought, and is not in character with the troubled era which produced, beside the so-called Christian Gnosticism, so many analogous systems. Philosophy, especially since the time of Descartes, presents itself to us as entirely distinct from poetry, by the severity of its methods and the rigour of its deductions. It may indeed seek to bring into conformity with its systems, the symbols of an already established and well-defined religion. This is the attempt which has been made by the Hegelianism of our day, with singular boldness of interpretation. But philosophy does not create new symbols, or if it did, it would treat them as simple metaphors not to be seriously accepted. The various provinces of the mind of man are as distinct as the various countries of the world; their boundaries are sharply marked. Imagination finds no place in modern speculation, or, at least, it only lends to it types more or less transparent. It was far otherwise in the earliest age of the Christian era. The religion and philosophy of Paganism—both resting,

* This is Baur's idea in his remarkable work on Gnosticism.

it is true, on one and the same basis—were constantly confounded. The classic style, with its chaste and lucid forms, had vanished from the intellectual world, no less than from the realm of art. The East overspread the entire West with its myths, its sublime poetry, its heterogeneous faiths. Hence resulted a mental condition not easily to be apprehended by us. In the world of ideas, the impossible had become the ordinary and familiar; men's minds were intoxicated with the philter of the great goddess, who, under the name of Isis, or Cybele, or Diana of Ephesus, was simply nature deified. Placing the infinite beneath, and not above, men strove at any cost to discover it, to animate the idol they had made, as Pygmalion strove to chafe his marble into the warmth of life; to nature was ascribed the creative power; it was supposed to contain hidden, mysterious forces, capable of producing universal life. These forces the eye of the imagination watches at work, like those primordial spirits which Faust beheld, "weaving the living robe of divinity upon the rushing loom of time." Thus does the most absolute naturalism merge into magic and theurgy, and lose itself in a fantastic dream, in which the strangest visions are taken for realities, and form the sequel to a close and abstract argument.

A knowledge of what may be called the intellectual pathology of this period—a period unique in history—is necessary to enable us to appreciate, or even to understand, the appearance of such a phenomenon as Gnosticism. This is only one of the special manifestations of a far more extensive movement, or rather, it is the reaction of that movement on the heart of Christianity. The second and third centuries of our era came, to a

large extent, under these combined influences of philosophy and religion, and the result was a sort of mystical naturalism, the development of which requires explanation. The religions of nature, after having opened the cycle of Paganism, must needs close it again; for, unaided, man can never wholly free himself from this circle; the soul seeks and yearns after a higher and holier God; sometimes it may even rise to Him with a sudden soaring impulse, but it cannot sustain itself at such a giddy height; it soon falls back under the dominion of natural forces, and returns to its former worship, but with a soul restless and dissatisfied. The old religion has lost that fresh and artless enchantment which breathes in the songs of the Vedas. The melancholy strain predominates, as at the close of a gay festival at Rome or Athens, when the crowns of the guests fall faded at their feet. Man is no more content with the natural phenomena of the bright and fruitful dawning, of the fertilising rain, and the fire "which quivers on the hearth like a bird of golden wing." Beneath the outward manifestation, he seeks the deep, hidden, boundless cause of all; he falls into a crushing pantheism, which brings him into the presence, not of a living God, but of a yawning abyss, in which there is neither beginning nor end, where everything is moving in one incessant process of evolution. The religion of India, especially in its final form of Buddhism, had given the most perfect expression to pantheistic naturalism; this was its final utterance. Its influence was therefore great in an age when the ancient barriers, by which nations were divided, were everywhere falling. It

exercised an unquestionably wider sway than Parseeism, which was less inclined to asceticism and ecstacy—the two wings, as they were increasingly regarded, by which the soul might be raised above the changing and perishable. Again, the religion of Zoroaster itself had a tendency to modification, as we have seen in tracing out the development of the worship of Mithra. The Greco-Roman religion, especially in Asia Minor and in Egypt, was largely transfused with oriental pantheism, which, with its elastic mythology, would bear any translation. Judaism had not escaped the influence of this wide-spread movement; even in the land of the prophets, in view of the sanctuary where all the national traditions were deposited, it had breathed the air which had swept over the great forests of India. Essenism was a sort of Jewish Buddhism, which carried into the burning solitudes of the Dead Sea, the same craving for self-annihilation.

The philosophy of the time—that philosophy, at least, which was not satisfied either with Epicureanism, or with the universal scepticism of the new Academy—endeavoured to reduce this naturalistic Pantheism to a system, and it had at its disposal the marvellous instrument of the logic of Plato and Aristotle, the bequest to it of the great classic school. We have already described elsewhere, the great Alexandrine movement, which issued in Neo-Platonism, and which may be regarded as parallel with Gnosticism, since it sprang from the same influences, and reveals the same tendency. This is to Platonism what Gnosticism is to Christianity, with this difference: that the system of Plato lent itself far more readily than the Gospel to

such an interpretation, because of the oriental element which so strongly pervaded it; nothing was needed, but the withdrawal of the moral character, to transform it into a purely Asiatic theosophy. Plutarch himself belonged to the same school. This son of Greece, who seems to have made it his task to collect assiduously all the treasures of the East, is in reality a deserter from the West, who has retained only the glorious memories and the luminous language of his country. From a philosophical point of view, he is in truth a perfect Eastern. The true God is to him a God hidden, incomprehensible, whom no creature can know, so much so that a mediating divinity, symbolised in his view by the goddess Isis, was necessary to effect the organisation of matter. The soul attains to the Deity only by means of ecstasy or contemplation, thus emancipating itself from all that is corporeal.* We know what development Plutarch gave to the theory of secondary deities and of demons. Even the Stoics, those apostles of stern resistance, who seem at the very antipodes of the despotic East, did not fail to work out, in their own way, the theme of pantheistic naturalism, and to supply elements for the lucubrations of Gnosticism. By uniting matter and reason in the first principle of things, they opened the way for all the combinations of the doctrine of emanation. But the great precursor of Gnosticism was Philo, who, himself the adherent of a monotheistic religion—the very religion which had prepared the way for Christianity—was obliged to submit his creed, as a Jew, to the same process of

* Ritter, "Histoire de la Philosophie Ancienne," Tissot's translation, Vol. IV. pp. 416, 417.

elaboration, which was necessary for translating the Gospel into an oriental theosophy. It is needless for us to dwell here upon a doctrine, the principal outlines of which we have already traced. Starting from the idea of a hidden, incomprehensible God, who has no contact with the finite, it developed most prominently the theory of intermediary divinities, who, by means of emanation, were able to produce the lower world, which the supreme God could not even touch. This was the world of the *Word*, or of ideas, which never reaches the reality of personal existence, notwithstanding all the striking and sublime metaphors of Philo. His final goal, like that of the whole East, was asceticism; he would that "as the cicada feeds on the dew, so the soul should live by ecstacy." In vain did he exhaust the sacred texts, and borrow from the Old Testament its most lofty images; he none the less belied its essence, by substituting salvation by means of knowledge and contemplation, for the moral reconciliation proclaimed in doctrine and figure, by all the voices of the prophets. The system of Philo was a true Jewish Gnosticism; and in combination with the various elements we have rapidly indicated, it reappears substantially in all the various forms of Gnosticism.

If we seek to distinguish in these various forms the several constituent elements, we discover the three great schools of thought of the period—Hellenism, Orientalism, and Christianity. From the first of these, Gnosticism derived its name, and that purely intellectual character which reduces religion to a mere speculation of the reason. From the second, it borrowed its pantheistic naturalism, full of a sombre sadness

and a bitter despair. From the third, it derived, in a changed and mutilated form, the notion of redemption; and this is the distinguishing point between Christian Gnosticism and the Gnosticism of Philo. We are conscious that the great crisis of the Gospel has intervened between the two doctrines: it is no longer possible to rest satisfied with a simple explanation of the universe, such as is given in the books of the Alexandrine Jew. The work of Christ has produced a great convulsion in the minds of men. It must, at any cost, find a place in a system which makes any claim to interpret the Gospel, and if that system still bears the blemish of an ineffaceable Pantheism, it must spend its strength in vain efforts to despoil the religion of love and liberty of its true character. Redemption must be treated as Philo treated the free creation; it must be reduced to a mere cosmological fact.

Before entering on the classification and exposition of the various systems of Gnosticism, we must first point out two general principles common to them all. They all incline to Docetism; they have a tendency to resolve a tangible reality into a mere semblance (*Δόξα*). This is a natural consequence of the principles of dualism. Associating evil with the corporeal element, they cannot admit that the Redeemer can have had any true contact with matter; they hold that He can only have assumed a seeming, impalpable, finer than aerial form, the shadow of a shade. Neither the incarnation nor the crucifixion can enter as actual facts into the Gnostic theory. Nor is it the corporeal element alone which is opposed to the absolute good;

all that is finite, limited, transitory, is placed in the same category. Contingent realities are of no value; individual beings are as the foam formed on the ocean and melting into it again. The one essential is the idea, the knowledge, the key of the universal enigma; history is but its fluctuating, fleeting expression. Hence the second trait, common to all Gnostic systems, the contempt of history, which becomes a sort of parable or mythology, designed to translate the ideal world into visible symbols. This explains the really wild licence of Gnostic symbolism. It imagines it has exalted the Gospel, because it has given it an illimitable sphere, and made the universe its arena; it does not see that it has lowered it by all the distance which separates the moral from the physical, since it reduces it to a mere theogony after the manner of Hesiod. Not only does it appropriate the facts in order to mould them at its will, but it takes no less liberty with the texts, by means of a perpetual system of allegorising, which gives full play to the imagination. When words are treated merely as the medium of preconceived ideas, they lend themselves to every invention of the mind; they may be played with like the pieces on a draught-board.

In employing so arbitrary an exegesis, the Gnostics, as Irenæus complained, "tore the truth limb from limb."* "They are," he adds, "like a man, who, possessing the likeness of a king made by a great artist with precious stones, should remove those precious stones, and, re-adjusting them, should clumsily produce the image of a fox or of a dog, all the while

* *Λυόντες τὰ μέλη τῆς ἀληθείας.* ("Contra Hæres.," I. 1.)

pretending to have preserved the noble outline, because the same jewels still sparkle before our eyes."

Faithful to the eclecticism of the time, Gnosticism gathered symbols and allegories on all hands; it drew from Pagan sources no less than from the sacred books of the Jews and the Christians. The fundamental theme of all these systems is the production of finite and contingent existence by means of emanation, or again by the blending of the Divine principle with eternal matter; the multiplied lives thus generated all return to the original unity; the Divine spark within them seeks its source again. Between the sphere of the Divine and the sphere of matter, lies the region of the intermediary powers, which serve as links between the two worlds; this is the region of the psychical. Naturalistic Pantheism has an infinite variety of forms, but these are its fundamental principles.

The main symbols designed to embody this universal element of Gnosticism may be classed under a few dominant types. The religions of Nature first of all deified the stars, because of the great influence they exert upon our planet; the sun was long the great divinity of Asia, the burning focus, as it were, whence emanated both death and life. The sidereal myths also play an important part in Gnosticism; the stars represent in that system the inferior gods presiding over the world of change and of matter. Number is the most elementary and obvious principle of order and harmony in the life of Nature; it expresses the measure and almost the idea itself. Oriental Paganism was led into the complicated calculations of astrology,

whence it thought itself capable of deducing the law of our destinies. Pythagorean philosophy was entirely constructed on this basis. We shall see how the Gnostics have developed that which may be called the mythology of numbers, and what place was occupied in their systems by the Ogdoas, the Hebdomas, and all the numerical combinations. Anthropomorphism is the most natural of all symbols; hence it filled a prominent place in almost all idolatrous religions, long before it received the brilliant and poetic transformation of Greek humanism. Pantheistic naturalism, moreover, may be said to be perpetually under the spell of a voluptuous enchantment; it gravitates altogether towards material pleasures, and delights in representing these to itself by the coarsest symbols. Transferring the relations of the sexes to the sphere of the gods, it always conceives of its divinities by couples or *Syzygiæ*. Whatever attempts are made to refine it in the course of ages, it undergoes no true change. It reappears in the so-called Christian Gnosticism with the same tendencies, filling the void regions of the absolute, with those sensual conceptions which had degraded all the ancient mythologies, nor does Gnosticism scruple yet further to draw largely from these mythologies, both from the pure and impure, to enrich and adorn its allegories. From Judaism it borrows the ladder of light, on which the angels ascend and descend, setting up, in the immensities of space, that scale of emanations, which reaches from the infinite heights of silence down to the manifold forms of material existence. The Old Testament also supplies elements for its unworthy travesty of the God,

who formed our world and all the lower orders of beings which live on the dust of the earth. The notion of redemption, not less distorted than that of creation, is taken from the Gospel, and the history of Jesus becomes the most fruitful and also the most strangely falsified of the Gnostic symbols.* Thus the four principal sources of the symbolism of the Gnostics are astrology, numerical combinations, anthropomorphism, and the history of religions.

Such, in its general characteristics, is the language used in the schools, which are at the same time sanctuaries, for the symbols are not mere metaphors; they are accepted literally; the heated imagination lays hold of them; the mind surrendered to unhealthy excitement, no longer distinguishes between the conventional sign and the thing signified; Gnosticism believes in the sign, as the Canaanite believed in his Baal, and the Egyptian in his bull Apis.

Many attempts have been made to classify rigorously the various Gnostic systems. Some have sought the principle by which to distinguish them in their historical and national origin;† but in an age of universal syncretism, when all barriers were broken down, a difference of nationality did not suffice to constitute a difference of tendency, so much the less as Gnosticism only came into being in countries which were all alike under the influence of the East. Others, identifying Gnosticism with the philosophy of religion, have divided it into three principal schools, according to the

* See Baur's "Die Christliche Gnosis," on this symbolism of Gnosticism, pp. 230-240.

† This is the theory of M. Matter's learned work.

place assigned by each to one of the three great forms of the religion of the past. We have first the systems, like those of Basilides and Valentinus, which acknowledged some kind of legitimacy in the old faiths, and a gradual evolution of the religious consciousness. Next come those which accept only one form of the ancient religions, namely, Judaism; this is the Gnosticism of the Clementines. Lastly, we have the doctrine of the Ophites, and the far higher teaching of Marcion, who holds that truth finds its final expression in Jesus Christ, and that all that went before was but frightful error.* This classification errs by considering Gnosticism too exclusively as a philosophical movement, and not enough as a combination of religion and speculation. The most reasonable division of the Gnostic systems seems to us that which takes as its basis, the position assumed by them towards the God of the Old Testament.† The question is twofold. It comprehends not only the degree of respect with which the revelations and institutions of Judaism are regarded, but also the more or less absolute character of the dualism of the system. In truth, the God of the Old Testament is the God who created the heavens and the earth. If He is regarded not as a God hostile to the supreme Deity, but simply as a subordinate divinity, as in the "Timæus" of Plato, the world which is His creation is not under the ban of a positive curse; there is still something good in it; its history, before Christ, is not of necessity a tissue of unrelieved and unmitigated

* This is Baur's classification. ("Die Christliche Gnosis," 97-121.)
† This is Neander's classification. ("Genetische Entwickelung der Vornehmsten Gnostischen Systeme, Kirchengeschichte," p. 430.)

evil. On the other hand, if the God who created the earth and the heavens, is a God absolutely evil, and at war with the higher world, then creation is in itself a curse, and His reign is but the continuous evolution of evil. In the former systems, the world is not the product of an eternal principle, opposed to the supreme Being; it is itself contained in the depths of the primal abyss; it is produced, doubtless, by a series of downward steps, but obviously it is not in itself absolutely evil, as it is in the second class of Gnostic systems, in which it is treated as the issue of a principle eternally distinct from the supreme Deity.

We see that the notion of the Creator God, or the *Demiurgos*, marks with great distinctness the line of demarcation between the various schools, although there is no radical difference between them, because no Gnostic school recognises a free creation.

§ I. *The Gnostics of the First School. Valentinus and his Followers.*

In this sketch of Gnosticism, we pass by scarcely developed systems, like that of Basilides, which compare the first principle to a confused germ, from which all the various substances are successively evolved by a sort of mysterious disintegration.

With Valentinus, Gnosticism assumes the form of a complete system, coherent in all its parts; the fusion between the Christian and Pagan elements is effected with profound art. All the lines of revelation are prolonged into indefinite perspective; behind the foreground of the Gospel narrative, extends a radiant and receding

distance, which affects the mind, and especially the imagination, with a sense of dizziness. The Christian consciousness is indeed soon able to dispel the illusion; it is not slow to recognise that this brilliant metaphysical vista minifies that which it pretends to magnify, since it destroys the distinction between the creation and the Creator; but let that voice of the Christian soul be but silent, and the illusion is complete. It is easy to understand how, from these giddy heights, the son of the East or of Egypt might look down with pitying contempt on the doctrine of the Church, with its sharply-drawn and simple outlines. Valentinus knew how to cast over his philosophy the veil of a false and flowery poetry, in perfect harmony with the taste of an age of decline, which could no longer appreciate the pure and quiet beauty of high art. In the same manner, he transfused into all his teaching, that sense of the bitter and tragic in existence, which was the distinctive feature of the Roman decadence; the overwhelming sadness of this period of universal decline, which seemed to close for ever the age of strength and health and youth, embodied itself in cunning symbols, and lent to them a morbid charm. Valentinus was, after his manner, a great lyric poet, expressing the sorrows of his time in the eccentric form which pleased him best. Moreover, all this sadness might be lightly accepted, because it did not lead to humility, nor call for repentance; it left erect the great idol of Paganism—humanity, which could behold itself deified upon the naked summits of the Valentinian metaphysics, no less than upon the golden heights of Olympus. Man was still set forth as the most perfect realisation of the

divine; the fall was only a necessary transition from the divine infinite to the human finite; redemption required neither repentance nor sacrifice, but simply the return of the finite to the infinite, and especially the knowledge of that return, which is Gnosticism. Salvation is then here also a matter of knowledge. The Pagan of yesterday might find such a reconstruction of his theories cheap, and easier a hundred times than the inward renewal, the baptism of water and fire, which begins with penitent tears, and is perfected under the consuming action of the spirit of holiness. It was more convenient, while, at the same time, it seemed more poetical, to transfer the drama of redemption to the realms of the infinite, than to give it our sinful earth as its theatre, and as its actors free moral beings, called to a death to self at the foot of the Cross.

We know but little about Valentinus himself. According to Epiphanius, he was a native of the shores of Egypt,* and received his philosophical training at Alexandria. Thence he is supposed to have come to Rome under Antoninus Pius, and only established himself as the head of a school in Cyprus. Tertullian asserts that he sought the episcopate, and that the check given to his ambition drove him into the ranks of the enemies of the Church. There is nothing to sustain this accusation, which the fiery African may easily have accepted in the heat of passion. There is no necessity for assigning petty spleen as the cause of the direction taken by the mind of Valentinus. He followed what has been one of the most enticing tracks of speculation in all ages, and was led into it by the

* Epiphanius, "Contra Hæres.," I. 31.

bent of his own genius. There is no injustice in accusing him of a lofty pride of intellect. The textual fragment of one of his letters, which Epiphanius has preserved, breathes the most arrogant contempt for simple faith. "I come to speak to you," he says, "of things ineffable, secret, higher than the heavens, which cannot be understood by principalities or powers, nor by anything beneath, nor by any creature, unless it be by those whose intelligence can know no change."* We can fancy we see this man, as Tertullian shows him to us, knitting his brow, and saying, with an air of mystery, "This is profound."†

The doctrine of Valentinus is far more easily epitomised than that of most of the Gnostics, because it forms one systematic whole.‡ It is not, properly speaking, dualistic, since his great aim is to show by what process of degeneracy, matter proceeds from the first principle; it is also moderate in its estimate of Judaism and of its God, and consequently in the sentence it passes upon creation. It is Platonist rather than Aristotelian, for it attaches great importance to the ideal world. Human history, before it is enacted in our world of mire and darkness, is unfolded in the higher sphere of the ideal. The tragedy of existence

* Epiphanius, "Contra Hæres., adv. Valentin.," I. 31.

† "Hoc altum est." (Tertullian, "Adv. Valentin.," I. 37.)

‡ The first book of Irenæus' treatise, "Contra Hæres.," is an important authority, as is also the passage of Epiphanius (I. 31), and that of Theodoret, which is very clear. But the "Philosophoumena" (VI. 29-39) supply on this point also the desiderated light with a distinctness that leaves nothing to be desired. Naturally, the exponents of the Valentinian system, who were not able to avail themselves of this incomparable authority, must be henceforth inadequate, though much may be gained from the works of Baur and Neander, already quoted.

is played in three acts: first, in the highest region, which is called the *Pleroma;* then in the intermediate sphere; and lastly, upon earth. It is in substance the same drama throughout; since it always treats of the trouble under which the universe groans, by reason of the aspiration of the finite after the infinite, trouble which resolves itself into the universal harmony, of which knowledge is the master-key; it is Gnosticism which reveals to every creature his true rank and destiny. The originality of the Valentinian teaching consists in its having depicted, with impassioned eloquence, the agony and ardent yearning of creatures separated from the absolute principle of their being, and in its having thus brought the pantheistic theosophy as close as possible to the idea of redemption, while yet failing to reach it. It is strange to see a system, idealist at its commencement, yielding to the influence of the grossest mythologies of the East, to such a degree as to borrow from them the idea of those pairings, or *Syzygiæ*, which in these occupy such a conspicuous place; nor is even the semblance of a metaphor retained; the allegory is carried to its furthest limits, and offers dangerous food for sensual imaginations. Thus the most purely ethereal and the most coarsely material elements are blended in these half-philosophical, half-legendary conceptions.

The principle of all things—the Immortal, the Ineffable, He who deserves the name of Father in the absolute sense—is an unfathomable abyss.* He is linked neither to space nor time; He is above all thought, and, as it were, shut up within Himself.

* Μονὰς ἀγέννητος ἄφθαρτος, γόνιμος πατήρ. ("Phil.," VI. 29.)

Around Him is eternal silence. The Father is not willing to remain in solitude, for He is all love, and love can only exist where it has an object.* Thus He produced by emanation the *Intellect* and the *Truth*. The *Intellect* is the consciousness which the Father has of Himself; it is the only Son, His living image, who alone makes known the Father. The *Intellect* is at the same time the *Truth*, because of this identity. The *Intellect* and the *Truth* produce the *Word* and the *Life*. This is the great quaternion of the absolute. The *Intellect* finds its perfect expression in the *Word;* that expression is not a mere symbol, since it is also the *Life*. The Word and the Life produce *Man* and the *Church*. What does this mean, if not that the absolute can only be fully manifested in humanity? The transcendently divine blends with the essentially human. The *Intellect* and the *Truth* produce for the glory of the Father ten emanations, which are called *Æons* or *Eternities*. The *Word* and the *Life* produce twelve emanations, a number less perfect than the ten. The supernal sphere of the *Pleroma* is then complete.† Thus there rises into the infinite that ladder of emanations which Tertullian called, in his powerful language, the *gemoniæ* of the Deity.‡ Even into this highest and ideal sphere, discord enters. This is inevitable, unless perfect equilibrium be maintained between the twofold force which animates the *Æons*, which are, on the one hand, drawn towards their centre—that is, to the abyss from which they spring; and, on the other hand, are subject to the centrifugal power of projection

* Ἀγάπη ἦν ὕλος, ἡ δὲ ἀγάπη οὐκ ἔστιν ἀγάπη. ἐὰν μὴ ἦ τὸ ἀγαπώμενον. ("Phil.," VI. 39.) † Ibid. VI. 30. ‡ Tertullian, "Adv. Valentin.," I. 36.

or emanation. They proceed from the infinite and tend to it, yet they are not the infinite, and are not to be confounded with it. The moment that the equilibrium of the two forces ceases, the harmony of the Pleroma is broken. This catastrophe is brought about by the last of the twelve Æons, produced by the *Word* and the *Life*, which is the twenty-eighth emanation. This Æon, finding herself on the confines of the region of light, is consumed with the desire to be reunited to the Father; she is not content with the portion of the divine essence which has been allotted to her as her share; she compares it with the infinite, the absolute, and deems it a poor and miserable heritage; she aspires therefore to lose herself in the silent abyss of the first principle. This last of the Æons of the Pleroma, which is called *Sophia*, or Wisdom, has yet larger ambitions; she is desirous, in imitation of the first principle, to become herself a producer, but to produce alone, without the aid of the Æon, which forms with her a *Syzygia*, or divine couple.* But the uncreated can alone produce under such conditions; for all inferior orders of being, two elements are required for the production of anything—the feminine element, or the vague and formless substance, and the masculine or formative element.† Hence the necessity of *Syzygiæ*. Now, the *Sophia* is the feminine Æon. She is therefore capable of producing only a formless being—an abortion.‡ In her rashness, she has broken the harmony

* Ἠθέλησε μιμήσασθαι τὸν πατέρα καὶ γεννῆσαι καθ' ἑαυτὴν ἴδιον τοῦσυζύγου. ("Phil.," VI. 30.)

† Ἐν τοῖς γεννητοῖς τὸ μὲν θῆλυ ἐστιν οὐσίας πρόλητικόν, τὸ δὲ ἄρρεν μορφωτικόν. (Ibid., VI. 30.)

‡ Οὐσίαν ἄμορφον. (Ibid.)

of the Pleroma; discord has entered, and it is impossible to tell where it may end. All the Æons supplicate the Father to arrest it by consoling *Sophia*, who bursts into tears and groans at sight of the shapeless being to which, in her isolation and impotence, she has given birth.* The salvation of the Pleroma is contingent on the production of a new emanation. The *Intellect* and the *Truth* give birth to the Christ and the Holy Spirit; the number of the Æons being thus raised to thirty. These two new Æons represent the power of restoration of harmony, and order. They begin by ejecting from the Pleroma the mal-formed product of Wisdom; the Father sets up the *boundary*, called also the *Cross;* He places it between the higher world and the lower, to which belongs the wretched abortion of which Wisdom is the parent; this abortion is designated by the name *Achamoth*. The Christ and the Holy Spirit give it a form, and save it from losing itself in utter confusion.† Then they return to the Pleroma, and instruct the Æons in the eternal order of things and the grandeur of their origin, for they all proceed from the same principle. The Pleroma, thus delivered from rash ambitions, is restored to harmony, and praises the Father. All the Æons together produce, as a pledge of this harmony, and as a testimony of their gratitude, one last Æon, who is called Jesus, or the Saviour, and who is the fruit of the Pleroma.‡ Thus is completed the first part of this trilogy, which comprehends three worlds, like the poem of Dante, and

* Ἐκλαιε γὰρ καὶ κατωδύρετο. ("Phil.," VI. 31.)
† Ἦν ὁ χριστὸς ἐμὸρφωσε. (Ibid.)
‡ Ὁ κοινὸς τοῦ πληρώματος καρπὸς ὁ Ἰησοῦς. (Ibid., VI. 32.)

which only reproduces the same drama under different forms.

Let us attempt to translate all this ontological mythology into the exact style of metaphysics, bearing in mind that Gnosticism never separated ideas from the legendary tissue in which it embodied them. The absolute must necessarily emerge from its state of immobility; a hidden principle is at work in the dark abyss, and elicits from it the universal life, which developes itself by successive stages. But this manifestation of the absolute issues of necessity in an imperfect life; from this fatal imperfection results a sorrowful yearning after the infinite, and this aspiration only finds its goal and satisfaction in the knowledge of the eternal and normal relation of all beings with the absolute, as derived from it, and still constituting a part of it. The absolute is found again in them, or rather they are found in it; it follows that the finite and imperfect existence appears in the brightness of the Pleroma, "like a little spot upon a white tunic." Thus salvation in this higher sphere of life proceeds from knowledge (*gnosis*). The Christ is the determining, formative power, the revealer by pre-eminence.

Let us pass on to the second act which is played in the vague regions bordering on the Pleroma. Here the poetic and metaphysical genius of Valentinus is most fully manifested. Creation and redemption are one and the same to him, for our world was only produced for the consolation and restoration of that unhappy son of Wisdom who, cut off from the region of light, yet could not lose the recollection of it. The Christ of the Pleroma, and the Holy Spirit, have

left him to himself, after giving him a definite form; he cannot be consoled for the loss of that bright vision; the sweet fragrance of their presence abides with him, and he cries with tears for their return.

The Sophia of the Pleroma has communicated all the fire which consumed her to Achamoth, that shapeless product of her daring aspirations; he again, following her example, darts upwards towards the infinite, painfully beating his wings against the impassable boundary, and crying out passionately for the Divine light and life.* He is the meanest creature upon our world, and yet there is none more noble by reason of his ardent longing after God, and that ceaseless, sacred yearning which will not let him rest. Sometimes a bright smile breaks through his tears; it comes at the recollection of the brief glimpse that was granted him of the Pleroma.† How can we fail to recognise in him, the image or personification of that race of fallen gods who, as they move on earth, carry with them the memory of their heavenly origin? Never was the exile of the soul, the daughter of the light, described in grander poetry. Our world is born of the agonies of Achamoth; of these the tissue of earthly existence is woven; his broken heart throbs in all nature. Hence the universal sigh which seems to swell the bosom of earth as sobs upheave the heart of a weeping child.

The Pleroma has compassion on Achamoth. It sends him Jesus, or the Saviour—that blessed fruit

* Ἐλυπήθη καὶ ἐν ἀπορίᾳ ἐγένετο. ("Phil.," VI. 32.)

† All that relates to the sadness of Achamoth is fully treated by Irenæus. ("Contra Hæres.," I. chap. 1, edit. Feuardentius, p. 20.) Ποτὲ μὲν ἴκλαιε ποτὲ δ' αὖ πάλιν ἐφοβεῖτο, ποτὲ διεχεῖτο καὶ ἐγέλα.

of its own harmony. Jesus delivers Achamoth from the burden of his griefs, and after having drawn these from his breast, he gives them the form of a concrete substance. Thus is produced the lower world, which will become in its turn the scene of the same sorrows and deliverances as the two higher regions. The sombre sadness of Achamoth becomes the material element; his despair is the demonaical essence; his fear and aspiration give birth to the intermediate or psychical element, which is neither matter nor spirit.* Nothing could be more ingenious than this attempt to resolve the dualism, which had so long weighed upon the thought of the ancients, by means of this sort of crystallisation or petrifaction of the feelings of the exiled Æon. According to Irenæus, Valentinus carried this poetical theory of the creation still further. The streams and fountains which we behold are the tears of Achamoth, while the soft light which gladdens us is the radiation of his joy, when he recalls the visit of the heavenly emanations.† The *Demiurgos* has a place in this system; he is born of the terror of the Æon, the salutary fear which is the beginning of wisdom, since it accompanies the ardent supplication which is granted by the Pleroma. While Achamoth occupies the *Ogdoas*, or the heavenly Jerusalem, the *Demiurgos* is consigned to the *Hebdomas*, composed of seven gods, which are themselves seven Æons. These symbolical figures mark the difference of the two regions, for the Ogdoas is the sphere where dwells

*Ἐποίησεν ἐκστῆναι τὰ πάθη ἀπ' αὐτῆς καὶ ἐποίησεν αὐτὰ ὑποστατικὰς οὐσίας, καὶ τὸν μὲν φόβον ψυχικὴν ἐποίησεν οὐσιαν, τὴν δὲ λύπην ὑλικήν, τὴν δὲ ἀπορίαν δαιμόνων. ("Phil.," VI. 33.)

† Irenæus, "Contra Hæres.," I. chap. I.

the Spirit, raised immeasurably above the psychical, who has produced seventy beings which share in his spiritual essence. The Demiurgus, as his name indicates, is the creator and organiser of our world; he believes himself to be its supreme God, and so declares himself to Moses and to all the men of the Old Testament. "I am God," he says, "and there is none beside me."* Men were created by the Demiurgus; their body is composed of material elements, but their soul is of psychical essence.† Achamoth, unknown to the earth-god, communicates some sparks of the Spirit to a select number of men. These constitute the moral aristocracy of mankind; they are the spiritual in opposition to the psychical and material beings. Men are thus classed by the predominance in their nature of one or other of the three elements which constitute this sphere of existence.‡

The prophets of the Old Testament were only the organs of the Demiurgus. In the fulness of time the Redeemer appeared; He is the third manifestation of the power of restoration and of harmony, consequently, the third Saviour. The school of Valentinus is divided on the question of the nature of His body. The Westerns ascribed it to a psychical origin; they supposed it to have been formed by the Demiurgus, and held that the spirit only entered into it at His baptism. The Easterns, on the contrary, pronounced the body to be, from its origin, of spiritual essence. Absolute docetism was the consequence of this conception. Both schools, however, admitted the miraculous birth of the Saviour.

* Οὐδὲν οἶδεν ὁ δημιουργὸς ὅλως. ("Phil.," vi. 33.)
† Ibid., vi. 33. ‡ Ibid., vi. 34.

Messiah passed through the womb of Mary, "as water through a channel."* He enlightened the Demiurgus as to the existence of the Pleroma, and then carried the true light to the spiritual portion of mankind, which was destined to receive it. Achamoth sees the gates of everlasting light open before him, and forgets his long distress. The Demiurgus takes his place in the *Ogdoas;* the spiritual men—the true Gnostics—united to the beings emanated from Achamoth, are delivered for ever from that which is perishable, and enter into the ineffable blessedness of the Pleroma. Matter vanishes, consumed by fire. It is no longer more than a shadow upon the bright substance of supreme felicity.† In all the schools of Gnosticism we see that illumination is the substitute for redemption. Sacrifice, in any true sense, has no place where sin has no reality. Everything hinges on the relations of the finite with the infinite, and not on those of the moral creature with the Holy God. Thus all this brilliant metaphysical speculation is hung over an empty place; it issues in a hopeless fatalism, in an absolute and capricious predestination, which limits salvation to the chosen ones of Wisdom, the sons of light. It is indeed worthy of observation, that predestination made its first appearance in Christianity under the garb of heresy. It was the very soul of Gnosticism. "The Valentinians," says Irenæus, "feel themselves under no necessity to attain by their deeds to the spiritual nature; they possess it

* Γεγέννηται ὁ Ἰησοῦς διὰ Μαρίας. ("Phil.," vi. 35.) Ἰησοῦν διὰ Μαρίας ὡς διὰ σωλῆνος. (Epiphanius, "Contra Hæres.," 31.)

† "Phil.," vi. 36.

inherently, and regard themselves as perfectly saved by divine right. Just as gold, which has been buried in clay, does not thus forfeit its beauty, but retains its true nature unalloyed, so do these men receive no hurt from all the sensual indulgences which they allow themselves, but preserve their spiritual essence."*

The Old Testament, and the God whom it reveals, are not treated by Valentinus with much reverence. The Demiurgus, however, sins only through ignorance; he possesses a relative truth. He himself is to be raised to the borders of the Pleroma. There is not, then, positive and absolute opposition between the two Testaments, notwithstanding the scorn of the sect with regard to Hebrew prophecy.

So bold and poetical a system as that of Valentinus, opened a large career for inventive and subtle imaginations. The fundamental theme was variously modified, according to the caprice of each. We need not enter in detail into these idle vagaries of the mind, carried about by every passing wind, without the steadying ballast of the moral life. Among the chief disciples of Valentinus, may be named Bardesanes of Edessa, Marcus, Ptolemy, and Heracleon. These confined themselves to making variations on the theme of these tortuous metaphysics. These systems passed by the most sublime and original portion of the doctrine of Valentinus, that which relates to the fall and the aspirations of Achamoth, that child of Wisdom placed on the borders of the Pleroma, as the poetical personification of our fall, and who is ever divided

* Μὴ διὰ πράξεως ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸ φύσει πνευματικοὺς εἶναί. (Irenæus, I. 1. p. 26.)

between bitter memories and ardent longings. This gap is filled by a curious anonymous document in the Coptic language, lately discovered. The date is doubtful; it evidently belongs to the period when Valentinian Gnosticism had reached its full development,—about the close, therefore, of the second century. It is entitled "Pistis Sophia," the Believing Wisdom.* The general dogmas of the Valentinian system are found in it, though half buried in a luxurious and monotonous vegetation. The theme is always the same—a *gnosis*, or hidden doctrine, which brings salvation by simple illumination. Jesus Christ returns from the heavens into which He had reascended, and appears to His disciples on the Mount of Olives, to reveal to them the sublime mysteries of the truth. They form around Him the inner and privileged circle of the spiritual ones, whose charge it is to transmit this hidden manna to the pneumatic men of future generations. All these revelations revolve around the destiny of Sophia, who here symbolises, far more clearly than among the early Valentinians, the melancholy condition of the human soul, which, as the punishment for having sought to overpass the limits of its original sphere, is tormented by the cosmical powers, among which we recognise the Demiurgus. He produces, by emanation, a terrible power with a lion face, which, surrounded by other similar emanations, terrifies the noble and ardent exiled Sophia, even in the dark regions of matter, flashing before her eyes a false and misguiding brightness. Nevertheless,

* "Pistis Sophia." "Opus gnosticum e codice manuscripto coptico latinè vertit Schwartz." (Ed. I. H. Petermann, Berlin, 1853.)

she does not lose courage; she still hopes and believes. Hence she deserves the name of the Believing Wisdom. Twelve times she invokes the Deliverer in strains of passionate and truly sublime supplication; these are her twelve repentances.* Her deliverance is accomplished by means of an equal number of interventions on the part of Jesus. As the fall, or sin, is nothing more than an obscuration produced by matter, so salvation is simply a return to the light. This division of the lamentations of Sophia and the interventions of Jesus, produces a wearisome amount of repetition; the aspirations of the soul are, however, rendered with a force, all the more poetic, because so largely derived from the Old Testament. In particular, all the penitential Psalms are applied to Sophia, being wrested from their natural meaning. "O Light of lights," she exclaims, "thou whom I have seen from the beginning, listen to the cry of my repenting.† Save me, O Light, from my own thoughts, which are evil. I have fallen into the infernal regions. False lights have led me astray, and now I am lost in these chaotic depths. I cannot spread my wings and return to my place, for the evil powers sent forth by my enemy, and most of all this lion-faced power, hold me captive. I have cried for help, but my voice dies in the night. I have lifted up my eyes to the heights, that thou mayest come to my aid, O Light. But I have found none but hostile powers, who rejoice in my affliction, and seek to increase it, by putting

* "Nunc cujus *πνεῦμα* alacre, progreditor, ut dicat solutionem duodecimæ *μετάνοιας πίστεως σοφίας*." ("Pist. Soph.," p. 70.)

† "Lumen luminum, cui *ἐπίστευσα* inde ab initio, audi igitur nunc, lumen, meam *μετάνοιαν*." (Ibid., p. 33.)

out the spark of thine which is in me. Now, O Light of truth, in the simplicity of my heart I have followed the false brightness which I mistook for thine. My sin is wholly before thee. Leave me not to suffer longer, for I have cried to thee from the beginning. It is for thee that I am plunged into this affliction. Behold me in this place weeping, crying out again for the light, which I have seen upon the heights. Hence the rage of those who keep the doors of my prison. If thou wilt come and save me, great is thy mercy; grant my supplication. Deliver me from this *dark matter*, lest I be, as it were, swallowed up in it."* "O Light, cast upon me the flame of thy compassion, for I am in bitter anguish. Haste thee, hear me. I have waited for my spouse that he might come and fight for me, and he comes not. Instead of light, I have received darkness and matter. I will praise thee, I will glorify thy name; let my hymn rise with acceptance to thee at the gates of light. Let my whole soul be purified from matter, and dwell in the divine city. Let all souls which *receive the mystery* be admitted therein."† The same cry rises twelve times to the Deliverer. "I am become," says Sophia again, "like the demon who dwells in matter, in whom all light is extinct. I am myself become matter. My strength is turned to stone in me.‡ I have set my love in thee, O Light, leave me not in the chaos. Deliver me by thy knowledge.§ My trust is in thee;

* "Libera me e ὕλῃ hujus caliginis." ("Pist. Soph.," p. 34.)
† "Ψυχαί horum qui suscipient mysterium." (Ibid., p. 36.)
‡ "Atque mea vis congelascuit in me." (Ibid., p. 43.)
§ "Libera me in tua cognitione." (Ibid., p. 56.)

I will rejoice, I will sing praise to thy glory, because thou hast had pity on me. Give me thy baptism, and wash away my sins." This mythology, full of poetic sadness, was skilfully spread as a veil over the abstractions of Gnosticism, and adapted them to the taste of subtle and unhealthy minds. The dialogue between Jesus and His disciples, in spite of its uniformity, pleased the readers of the apocryphal Gospels, and satisfied those feverish imaginations which had lost the sense of true beauty. Pride found its gratification in these new mysteries, which emulated in every respect those of Eleusis or of Mithra.

§ III. *The Gnostics of the Second School.* (*a*) *The Ophites. Marcion.*

The special feature of the second Gnostic school is that in its teachings the Demiurgus appears as a decidedly maleficent being, instead of simply belonging to an inferior order, ignoring the Pleroma, as in the systems of Basilides and the earlier Valentinians. This school is inaugurated by some heretics called *Ophites*, because they made the serpent a beneficent being, in order the better to mark their opposition to the God of the Old Testament. His foe was, in their view, a deliverer. They indulged in all sorts of fanciful inventions to explain the origin of the world. The first Ophites make their appearance at the commencement of the second century, but they had successors in the time of Irenæus, who added fresh absurdities to their system. We simply mention them here.

The most eminent representative of the second

school of Gnosticism is Marcion. If it is always difficult to separate a system from the person of its author, this is especially the case with the doctrine of this famous heretic, for it bears so distinctly the impress of his ardent but narrow soul, passionately attached to Christianity, but unjust (as passion itself even when its object is the most noble and elevated); enamoured of the highest moral ideal, but finding means to falsify it by unsound exaggeration. Grave, however, as were these errors of Marcion, he nevertheless commands our respect by the nobleness of his character and the grandeur of some of his thoughts, which have become causes of discord only because he has presented them without the qualifications which would have completed them. Marcion possessed the genius of a reformer. He was a Saul of Tarsus, ever abiding under the burning brightness of the revealing flash on the road to Damascus, never attaining to the full and calm light of a settled faith. An impetuous disciple of St. Paul, he compromises the cause he has embraced, by disregarding the grand and suggestive synthesis of the Apostolic preaching, and giving prominence only to its negative and polemical side. He believes himself called to renew perpetually the scene at Antioch; he treats the Church like another Cephas, whose attachment to Judaism demands a reprimand, and, under the name of Judaism, he comprehends all which is more or less remotely connected with the religion of the Old Testament. This was a deviation from the broad and profound views of the Apostle of the Gentiles, with regard to the relations of the two covenants, and in particular of the prepara-

tory province of the law. Thus did this ultra Paulinist fail to fulfil the noble mission devolved upon him, for nothing was more opportune in his day than a reaction against Judaising tendencies, which were the more dangerous, that they were disguised under new names. The spirit of reformation is distinguished from the spirit of revolution in this—that it destroys only the parasitic growths, without touching the vital parts of the tree.

To be just, we must bear in mind the circumstances under which Marcion grew up. A native of the shores of the Euxine, born in the year 120, he was educated amidst a school which borrowed from the apocryphal literature of the Jews the warm and vivid tints with which it depicted the future of the Church, and was thus led into positive materialism. Marcion's tendencies were altogether in an opposite direction. The son of a devout bishop, he was distinguished by an exalted piety, verging on asceticism; one of his first steps was to make a gift to the Church of a large sum of money.* We cannot admit the serious charge made by Tertullian against his moral character; it was so common to compare heresy to spiritual adultery, that a bold figure, interpreted by inveterate malignity, may easily have grown into a calumny not intended. Probably the opposition offered by Marcion to Judaising Christianity was fierce and immoderate, as might be expected from such a man. In consequence of some differences, in which his father seems to have taken part against him, Marcion repaired to Rome.† This was the great theatre upon which every inventor of

* Tertullian, "De præscriptionibus," c. xxx. † Ibid., c. li.

a new thing sought to enact his part, well knowing that there was no surer way of gaining publicity for his ideas. Marcion had occupied himself very little with metaphysics up to this time; he had no taste for all the subtleties of Valentinian Gnosticism. The bent of his mind was far more to Christian practice than to theosophy. In his keen antipathy to the Judaisers, he included the Old Testament itself, without embodying his views in any definite system. It was necessary, however, that he should give a speculative basis to his ideas, for they could not exercise any important influence while they remained in a fragmentary form. This necessity explains the subsequent reconciliation between Marcion and Gnosticism. At Rome he met a moderate Gnostic, who had abandoned the learned and poetic ontology of the Valentinians, and who shared Marcion's violent antipathy to Judaism. This man was named Cerdo, and was a Syrian by birth. Discarding the elaborate genealogy of the Æons, he was satisfied with recognising a visible and inferior God in addition to the supreme and invisible Being; the latter represented goodness, the former justice. The opposition between the Gospel and the Old Testament was thus vindicated. Cerdo combined with these views a very decided tendency to asceticism.* Marcion's predispositions were all in favour of such a system; he supplemented it, and imparted to it the fervour and boldness of his own nature. Thus he made it a really powerful doctrine, which gathered many adherents.

* "Phil.," vii. 37. Comp. Eusebius, "H. E.," IV. 11; Irenæus, "Contra Hæres.," i. 27.

He seems to have always dreaded schism. When Polycarp came to Rome he sought his friendship, but the patriarch of the churches of Asia Minor repelled him with the words, "I know thee: thou art the first-born of Satan."* Addressing himself one day to the elders of the Church of Rome, Marcion asked them what Jesus had meant when He spoke of the piece of new cloth, which, being put in, rends the old garment. Not content with their answer, which was full of wisdom, he boldly applied these words to the Old Testament, which he likened to the worn-out vesture: "And I also," he exclaimed, "will rend the Church, and the rent shall be for ever."† It is difficult to believe, with Tertullian, that such a man should have sought, at the close of his life, reconciliation with orthodoxy.‡

Marcion is distinguished from the other Gnostics, first, by his strong repudiation of that sort of intellectual aristocracy, so scornful of the *profanum vulgum*, which set up between the learned and the ignorant the very barrier which the Lord had cast down. Marcion did not even sanction the distinction commonly made in public worship, between the members of the Church and the catechumens, so fully was he taken up with the desire to popularise the truth.§ He also entirely rejected the method of allegorical interpretations, and argued for an adherence to the natural meaning of the texts, without recourse to a compliant exegesis, which avoided all the real difficulties, merging them in an

* Eusebius, "H. E.," IV. 14. † Epiphanius, "Contra Hæres.," 42.
‡ Tertullian, "De præscript.," 30.
§ "Marcion hunc locum (Gal., vi. 6) ita interpretatus est, ut putaret fideles et catechumenos simul orare debere." (Jerome, "Comment. in ep. ad Gal.")

arbitrary symbolism. Refusing to adopt the artifices by which difficult texts, or those which gave occasion for scandal, were disposed of, he preferred to set aside that which he could not interpret, and he made a sacred book for his own use, which contained, according to him, the true tradition of the teaching of Jesus Christ. He found this pure tradition only in the writings of St. Paul and in the Gospel of Luke, which he ascribed to the direct influence of the Apostle of the Gentiles. Even this he accepted only with reservations, and eliminated from it all that was incompatible with his system. Thus Marcion became the father of purely internal and subjective criticism.

There has been much discussion as to whether he recognised two or three essential principles of things. It is certain that he established an eternal opposition between the supreme God and uncreated matter, the source of all evil. The moot point is, whether the Demiurgus, or the inferior God, who created the world, was raised by him to the rank of a third principle. It seems that such was really his idea, for the opposition between the Demiurgus and the supreme God is too radical to admit the supposition that the former proceeded from the latter. Again, matter is clearly distinguished from the Demiurgus,* since the first man was condemned for this very offence of having violated the law of his Creator under the influence of matter. It is better to adhere to the co-existence of three distinct principles, with this

* "Ετεροι δὲ καθώς καὶ ὁ ναύτης Μαρκίων, δύο ἀρχὰς εἰσηγοῦνται. ("Rhodos apud Eusebius," H. E.," V. 13.) Δύο [illegible] ὑπέθετο. ("Phil.," vii. 29.)

reservation, that the material principle, being essentially negative, cannot be compared with the two others; the system, after all, therefore, is essentially dualistic.* We shall not attempt to introduce rigorous exactness into the metaphysics of a school which makes practical religion its absorbing theme. Marcion does not endeavour to connect the created world with the higher sphere by a long chain of emanations or Æons. The supreme God of his system remains motionless through all eternity; He only emerges from this state of quiescence at the time of salvation. The Demiurgus creates the world without any suspicion of the existence of a power higher than his own; he fashions incoherent matter, and forms from it the human body, into which he breathes life. He gives man a law, but without rendering him capable of fulfilling it. The fall of man is laid to the charge of the Demiurgus.† It is not simply the visible God, as opposed to the invisible; he represents further, strict, implacable justice, which deals with the external alone, recognises only a mercenary and imperfect virtue, and takes vengeance for

* Tertullian enumerates three principles in Marcion's system: "Et materia enim deus secundum formam divinitatis, innata scilicet et infecta et æterna. Atque ita tres interim mihi deos numera Marcionis." ("Adv. Marc.," i. 15.) Neander ("Kirch. Gesch.," i. 521; "Gnostisch. Syst.," 287, *et seq.*), in his admirable exposition of Marcion's system, has fallen into the mistake of attempting to trace back the Demiurgus to the supreme God, while Baur, also aiming at an impossible symmetry, has identified him with the material and visible cause. ("Christlische Gnosis," 276-282.) There is opposition, however, between the Demiurgus and Nature, as is proved by the fall of man. This opposition is clearly shown from the fragment of the Armenian book of Esnik, quoted by Mœller ("Gesch. der Kosmologis," p. 378, *et seq.*), in which matter struggles with the Demiurgus for the possession of man.

† Tertullian, "Adv. Marc.," ii. 5.

evil rather than punishes it.* The Demiurgus is the evil tree of the parable, which is known by its fruit.† The Old Testament is the monument of this maleficent activity, the Jewish people is the people of the Demiurgus, the law is the emanation of his cruel justice, and the miserable destinies of Israel reveal the impotence of a God who could not even secure the happy fortunes of his favourites.‡ Paganism belongs to matter and to the demons, as Judaism to the Demiurgus. Such is the state of the world up to the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius.

Suddenly, without transition or preparation, like the lightning clearing the cloud, the supreme God appears in the person of Jesus Christ.§ This supreme, invisible, unknown God is sovereign goodness, love, as opposed to justice. He is never angry; He can only pity and pardon. Thus He grants salvation not to a legal righteousness, but to the trusting faith which surrenders to Him.¶ Here is the echo of one of the grandest utterances of Paul. Unhappily, it is wrested from its true meaning, for love, apart from righteousness, is but blind kindness, weak indulgence. The merciful, apart from the holy God, is no longer the Most High.

Marcion attempted to intensify the contrast between the Demiurgus and the supreme God, by drawing up a long list of antitheses between the Old and New Testaments. While the Messiah of the Demi-

* "Quo ore constitues divinitatem duorum Deorum, separationem seorsum deputans Deum bonum et seorsum Deum justum." (Tertullian, "Adv. Marc.," ii. 12.)

† "Phil., Epitome," x. 19. ‡ "Contra Marc.," ii. 18-29.

§ "Subito Christus." (Ibid, iv. 11, 17.)

¶ Ibid., iv. 20-24; Irenæus, i. 27.

urgus is a national and local Messiah, Jesus belongs to all mankind. The former promises only earthly good; the latter speaks altogether of heaven. The Demiurgus commands the children of Israel to carry away the treasures of Egypt; Jesus directs His disciples not to take so much as a staff in their hand. The Jewish God sends a bear to devour the children who had mocked Elisha, and calls down fire from heaven upon his enemies; the Gospel teaches only kindness and forgiveness. Lastly, the merciful Saviour chose as His disciples the outcasts from Judaism. These antitheses he sums up in these eloquent words: "While Moses lifts up his hands to heaven, invoking the slaughter of the enemies of Israel, Jesus stretches out His hands upon the cross for the salvation of all mankind." On the one side, is the spirit of revenge; on the other, is the triumph of love.* Jesus is the direct manifestation of the good and invisible God. In the fifteenth year of Tiberius it pleased God to come down to Nazareth, a city of Galilee. It was not possible for Him to come into contact with matter; Marcion, therefore, holds the most positive docetism. The birth of Jesus was only apparent, His body only a phantom. He took nothing from the world of the Demiurgus,† unless it were the name of Messiah, for the God of the Old Testament proclaimed the coming of a Jewish Saviour, and His prophets, one after another, predicted it. This inferior Saviour will indeed come, but only for the chosen

* Tertullian, "Adv. Marc.," ii. 25, 29.

† "Phantasma vindicans Christum, non erat quod videbatur, caro nec caro, homo nec homo." (Tertullian, "Contra Hæres.," 3, 8.) Ἀγέννητος ὁ Ἰησοῦς. ("Phil.," vii. 34.)

people; to them He will bring a salvation worthy of them—one, namely, that is purely material and earthly.* Meanwhile, the Demiurgus stirs up the hatred of the Jews against this rival power which has arisen in Jerusalem. Jesus is sacrificed under his influence. The death of the Redeemer may indeed have been only apparent, like the rest of His manifestations on earth; it yet points out to us the way to be made free by the breaking of material bonds. The Christ of Marcion does not rise again, but He goes down into Hades, not to seek the saints of the Old Testament, who are destined to the material joys of the paradise of the Demiurgus, but the unhappy Pagans, the sons of matter, who can be saved only by Him.†

According to the Armenian Esnik, an encounter takes place between Christ and the Demiurgus, on the confines of the higher world. The Crucified shuts the mouth of His adversary by confounding him from his own law, which forbids the shedding of innocent blood. He wrests from him the avowal of his inferiority, and delivers those of his subordinates, who have placed their trust in him, leaving the obstinate Jews to the harsh treatment of the Demiurgus. Jesus returns into heaven; thither He draws after Him, by the stern path of asceticism, all who believe in His word; their soul is to break through its material shroud, as the bird breaks the egg, or the ripe ear the straw which encloses it.‡ They are to prepare for the glories of the invisible by renouncing

* Tertullian, "Adv. Marc.," iii. 21. † Irenæus, "Adv. Hæres.," i. 27.
‡ Baur, "Christliche Gnosis," p. 273.

all material pleasures, and breaking all carnal bonds. Marcion imposed on his disciples absolute chastity; he condemned marriage, and required his catechumens to forsake family ties, and to renounce all earthly possessions. So far from fearing reproach and martyrdom, he exulted in both as the sure means of purification. "We are devoted," he says, "to hatred and to grief." It is easy to understand the influence exercised by such a system, for he was full of spiritual energy, of ardent love for Christ, and of a profound conviction of the unquestionable superiority of Christianity over all that had preceded it. His errors, the part he assigned to legendary metaphysics, and to oriental asceticism, gained him many sympathies in an age, the most decided tendencies of which found their satisfaction in him. Thus, in spite of sharp opposition, in spite of the passionate invectives of Tertullian, Marcionism gathered numerous adherents, and constituted a true schismatic church. His influence was felt even in the time of Theodoret, as we learn from his account of the savage old man he met, who washed his face with his own saliva, that he might not borrow even a drop of water from the accursed world of the Demiurgus.*

Among the Marcionites we may mention Preps, who insisted upon the existence of the third principle, and Apelles, who had an enthusiastic disciple in a woman named Philomela; he admitted four principles, making a sort of distinct personification of evil. He was as severe as Marcion upon the Old Testament; his docetism, however, appears to have been less pro-

* Theodoret, "De hæretic. fabulis.," i. 24.

nounced; for, in his view, Christ, in reascending to heaven, gave back the various particles of his flesh to the elements to which they severally belonged. Having made a long sojourn in Alexandria, he blended with the system of Marcion many elements of the doctrine of Valentinus. The fable of Sophia reappears in his notion of the Demiurgus, who sighs after the higher world, of which he has had a glimpse. A system which loses its definite outlines is bending to its fall. The school of Marcion was soon to be dissolved in the ever-heated crucible of fanatic speculation.

CHAPTER II.

MANICHÆISM.

GNOSTICISM, combated during nearly two centuries by the highest Christian genius of the East and West, was so much the more surely vanquished because it encountered a purely moral resistance, which did not dishonour itself by any appeal to force. Nevertheless, it reappeared in Persia, at the close of the third century, under a new form, which betrays the lassitude of the speculative spirit. The logical power displayed is much less than in the systems of Basilides and Valentinus, and the veil of legend, used to cloak the metaphysical construction under brilliant images, and to give it life and colour, has lost all originality. Manichæism is a translation into Christian language of the ideas which lie at the basis of the religion of Zoroaster, in combination with elements derived from the early heretics. As it touches the soil of Persia, however, Gnosticism springs into new life; if its creations are less bold, they are also less complicated, and more popular. Thus this impoverished version restored to it a measure of its forfeited credit, though it never made the same mark as the earlier forms of Gnosticism upon the thought of the Church; it neither became identified with it, nor stimulated it by the necessity of a vigorous resistance.

Manichæism arose in the midst of the religion which had been the clearest exponent of dualism, which had raised that principle to the very border of the spiritual world, but no higher, for it had never left behind the somewhat idealised opposition between darkness and light. We have seen that Christianity had early gathered many adherents in Persia. It had even exerted a deep influence upon the devotees of Zoroaster, who had borrowed from it the weapons with which they opposed it. The new sacred books composed at this period in Iran, bear the plain impress of Christian thought; the idea of redemption, though strangely distorted, occupies an important place. The development given by the Bundehesch to the myths, which concern the heroic conqueror of evil,—who bears the name sometimes of Sosiosch, sometimes of Mithra,—can be explained only by the indirect influence of the new religion. The famous mysteries of Mithra derived from the Gospel their fundamental idea of the renewal of the nature by means of death. The rites celebrated by their votaries were imitated from Baptism and the Lord's Supper. When we find a religion so ancient and so glorious as that of Zoroaster, thus seeking a compromise with a faith so long ignored and despised, we have a sure proof that Christianity must have grown up in juxtaposition with it with amazing rapidity, and must have made itself formidable as a rival. Manichæism is the counterpart, as it were, of these attempts at fusion; the new religion, ill-understood, and already corrupted in its essence, seeks alliance with the religion of the past, and endeavours to rejuvenate it by baptising it in

its own name. It leaves its doctrines untouched, and endeavours only to modify their expression. Mani is still a Magian, while he calls himself a Christian; herein lay the peril and also the inanity of the attempt.*

We have two series of documents relating to Mani, the one accredited in the East, the other derived from the historians of Persia. The former consist merely of an account of a supposed public discussion at Cascar, in Mesopotamia, between the heresiarch and a bishop named Archelaus. Not only do they abound in details as to the doctrine of Mani, but they also retrace his history. They suppose him to have had two immediate forerunners. The true founder of the sect is said to have been Scythianus, a rich Arab, well versed in all the sciences of Egypt, which he had made the country of his adoption. He has a disciple, named Terebinthus, who establishes himself

* The sources from which we have derived this exposition of Manichæism are, beside the modern historians of the Church: 1st. "The Dispute of Archelaus," contained in the fifth volume of Routh's "Reliquiæ," of the historical value of which we shall presently state our views. 2nd. The polemical writing of Titus of Botsra ("Contra Manichæos," Book IV., apud Henrici Canisii lection. antiq., Edit. Basnages, Vol. I.) 3rd. The fragments of Letters of Manes, collected by Fabricius ("Bibliotheca græca," Vol. VIII. p. 315); those collected by Augustine, especially in the "Opus imperfectum." 4th. A precious fragment of Agapius, a disciple of Manes, in Photius, "Bibliotheca," cod. 179. 5th. Alexander of Lycopolis, an Alexandrine philosopher, who lived between the fourth and fifth centuries, and who has given an exact exposition of Manichæism, at least in all that relates to the metaphysical part of the system. This valuable fragment is found in Combefis's collection, entitled, "Auctarium nov. Biblioth. Patrum," Part II. We may quote also Epiphanius, "Hæres.," 66, which is only a compilation of "The Dispute of Archelaus;" Theodoret, "De hæretic. fabulis.," i. 25. See, finally, "L'Histoire critique du Manichéisme," by Beausobre (Vols. I. and II.), a vast repertory of exhaustive information.

in Persia, and edits, in four books, the doctrine of his master. Mani, adopted by the widow of Terebinthus, gives a powerful impetus to the new heresy, enriching it by numerous additions from the sacred books of the Christians. He obtains great credit with the King, Sapores, but is ignominiously driven from the court, after having vainly attempted the miraculous cure of the King's son. He travels over the far East, but finally returns to Persia; he holds sharp controversies with the bishop Archelaus, in the public assemblies. Shamefully defeated, he escapes with difficulty the popular fury, and soon falls under the stroke of the prince whom he had deceived.

This legend, unsupported by any contemporary writer, has no other interest than that of showing clearly the eclectic character of the heresy of Mani, who aimed at nothing higher than a fusion of ideas, derived from all schools. The "Dispute" itself supplies more than one valuable and reliable light upon his doctrine.* The oriental version of the origin of Manichæism has in its favour the surest testimonies borrowed from the national history of Persia, and it commends itself by a great semblance of probability. It is from this source we derive the biography of the founder of Manichæism.†

* The "Dispute of Archelaus" can only be regarded as an unauthentic anti-Manichean compilation. Neither Eusebius nor Ephreus, who lived in Mesopotamia, make any mention of it. It is, moreover, full of inaccuracies. No such river is known as the Stranga, nor any such castle as Arabion, both of which appear in this narrative. The town of Cascar, which it places in the Roman Empire, belonged to the Persians. (See Beausobre, I., 133-139.) The "Dispute of Archelaus" is, nevertheless, of great value in a doctrinal aspect.

† The oriental version of the history of Manes is found in the

The dynasty of the Sassanidæ had just inaugurated in Persia an era of restoration, which had reinstated the national worship in an honourable position. The Persian historians speak of a sort of solemn council, held by the Magi, under King Artaxerxes, to fix the canon of doctrine. There was naturally much perturbation of mind in a period of universal renovation, in which the blending of peoples and races no longer made it possible for belief to be restricted within the narrow limits of a particular country. Christianity had gathered enough adherents to excite universal opposition, and to teach the world that the time of purely national creeds was irrevocably past. Thus the religion of Zoroaster, in commencing its new career, was constrained to have regard to this character of universality; but to this end, it must needs enlarge its historical basis, and enter into combination more or less close with the Gospel. This was the attempt, made in the year 240, by a young Persian named Mani, who seems to have united speculative genius with a brilliant imagination. It has been asserted that he belonged to one of those priestly families, which preserved the pure tradition of the Avesta, as the true sacred fire. It is very possible that he may himself have been one of the Magi, although we have no positive information on this point. His learning was vast; he surpassed all his countrymen. A mathematician, astronomer, musician, and painter, he was a man born to exert a great influence upon his contemporaries. It is doubtful if he

Persian historian Mirkhoud. (De Sacy, "Mémoires sur diverses antiquités de la Perse." Paris, 1793, p. 289, *et seq.*)

ever really connected himself with the Church, though it has been asserted that he for some time exercised the priestly office.

He never recognised the authority of Holy Scripture; he treated this like his own religion, retaining only that which was convenient. In reality, all he borrowed from Christianity was the name of Christ, and the words sin and redemption, which he translated in his own manner, although he preserved the notion of a new and final revelation, destined for the whole human race. In the time and country in which he lived, no system could succeed without the aid of the marvellous. Had he not the example of Zoroaster himself, who had spoken only of visions and ecstasies? A Magian, his contemporary, in repute for his holiness, was held to have been carried up into heaven during many days; there he had beheld, with his own eyes, the mysteries of the unknown world, and had been enabled, by the accounts he brought, to dispel the doubts of his sovereign as to the future life. Mani aspired to play a similar part; he sought to become another Daniel at the Court of Persia; to obtain the royal favour seemed to him the best means for securing the triumph of his doctrine. Thus he soon began to relate his visions and to play the prophet. He set himself forth as pre-eminently the apostle of Jesus Christ, the true interpreter of His teachings, directly inspired by Heaven. He assumed the name and the office of the Paraclete,* a convenient

* He declared himself to be the Paraclete promised by Jesus. He pretended to have received the gift of prophecy; he wrote a book which he said had come down from Heaven. ("Mirkhoud apud Sacy," p. 294.) In the "Dispute of Archelaus," Manes thus speaks of himself: "Sum quidem ego Paracletus qui ab Jesu mitti

artifice for misrepresenting primitive Christianity, by applying to himself the promises of the Master with reference to the revelations of the Holy Spirit, by which His teachings were to be made plain. With, however, much prudence, he sought to preserve the ideas of Zoroaster under Christian names; he yet laid too bold a hand upon the ancient worship of his country, not to provoke lively opposition. The King, whose favour he had at first won, withdrew it so soon as he saw Mani had formed a sect properly so-called, and that he had sent forth disciples to preach the new doctrine, without confining themselves to the national practices. This kind of innovation is in truth more dangerous than any doctrinal novelties; it needs more courage to attack the customs of a people than its theories, custom being the sensible form, the vesture of the idea which strikes all ages. His death was determined. He retired beyond the eastern frontier of Persia, and went even as far as India; he could not but feel himself drawn towards that land of boundless asceticism and sublime pantheism. Using every means to obtain popularity, he employed his talent as a painter, to cover with brilliant images the temples of the cities through which he passed. Strange apostleship, which, to secure

prædictus sum." (Routh, V. 73.) According to Augustine, he represented himself as the Apostle of Jesus Christ, that is, the Apostle by pre-eminence, who had received the fulness of the Holy Spirit. Augustine, "Contra Faustum," lib. xiii. c. iv., which is quite in harmony with his claim to personify the Paraclete. This may be judged from these words in the "Dispute of Archelaus": "Sicut et qui ante me missus est Paulus *ex parte scire et ex parte prophetare* se dixit, mihi reservans quod perfectum est." ("Disput.," Routh, V. 74.) Manes sends out twelve disciples, as did Jesus Christ. (Augustine, "Liber de Hæres.," c. 46.)

its reception, commenced by patronising the superstitions encountered on its way! At length Mani decided to strike his great blow. He retired into a cave, which, according to the testimony of his enemies, was only a mere grotto, opening out on to a fertile plain, where he found all that was needful for his sustenance. There he pretended to have been honoured with the most ecstatic visions, and to have been caught up into heaven. In this retreat he composed a book which he calls his Gospel, and which he adorns with magnificent symbolical paintings. He brings it back to Persia, as the work of God Himself. Surrounded with the halo of the marvellous, he is received as a new Zoroaster; his disciples rapidly multiply, and he finds great favour with the new King, Hormuz, the son of Sapores, who embraces his doctrine with enthusiasm. He even appears to have provided Mani with a place of refuge, a sort of citadel, where he might hide from the hatred of the Magi, and the opposition of the Christians, for he offended equally the adherents of both the old and the new religion by endeavouring to fuse them in a hybrid alliance which corrupted both. Unhappily for Mani, Hormuz only reigned two years, and Behram, his successor, was the sworn foe of Manichæism. After tolerating the sect, for prudential reasons, at the commencement of his reign, he soon displayed his true feeling by compelling Mani to accept the challenge of one of those public discussions, the issue of which is certain when a King presides. In the end he caused the death of the heretic, but he could not thus extinguish the heresy, which was too much in accordance with the tendencies of the period, to die with its

apostle, and which indeed gained from persecution a moral dignity lacking to it before. The torture of Mani displays extraordinary barbarity; he was flayed alive; his disciples, nevertheless, remained faithful to him, and, scattered far and wide by the persecution, they went everywhere carrying his doctrine, and thus gained for it an importance far outweighing its intrinsic worth. The Christians, alarmed at his influence, said of Mani, that he had opened his mouth like a sepulchre.*

The Manichæan system, which we gather from the writings of the immediate disciples as well as in the fragments of the master's book, makes no attempt to cloak the absolute dualism which is its fundamental principle.† Mani finds himself under no necessity to observe the ascending scale of fine gradations so skilfully devised by the Gnostic emanatists, and to assign to matter a metaphysical origin. From the commencement, he places the world of mind and the world of matter in direct opposition to each other, and allows them no point of contact. Titus of Botsra says: "Mani, in his anxiety to show that God was in no way the cause of evil, places uncreated evil in opposition to the uncreate divine essence."‡ "I recognise," said Mani, "two natures, the one good, the other evil; that which is good is found only in some parts of the world, that which is evil comprehends the whole world.§ This evil principle, which is at war with God from all

* Ὁ δὲ ὡς τάφον ἀνεῳγμένον ἔχων τὸ στόμα. (Routh, v. 99.)

† "Homo astutus cœpit in nostris libris occasiones inquirere *dualitatis* suæ." (Ibid., 193.)

‡ Κακιαν ἀντέστησεν αὐτῷ ἀγένητον ἀγενμτῳ. (Tit. Botsra, "Contra Manichæos," Bk. I. p. 60.) § "Archel. Disput.," Routh, v. 76.

eternity, is called sometimes Nature, sometimes Matter, sometimes the Prince of this World, sometimes Satan."* The element of disorder, which is in all things, is what Mani calls Matter.† Thus he confined himself to stating, broadly and simply, the opposition of Ormuz to Ahrimum—of the kingdom of light to the kingdom of darkness. Light is not in his theory the brilliant symbol of the good and the true; however ethereal and impalpable it is, it still belongs to the inferior world, and it is vain for him to compare it to the spiritual element. Nevertheless he constantly contrasts the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light, as matter with spirit. This kingdom of light is governed by a first principle, who calls himself the *Good*—the God *par excellence*, but whose personality is less distinct than that of Ormuz, and loses itself, or is merged in the eternal light, which is essentially diffused; he is identified with every luminous substance. Matter, personified in the same way, in the wicked one or the devil, is normally in a state of confusion, of incoherence, of truly chaotic disorder. It follows its impetuous impulses like the sea, the waves of which are uplifted with every stormy wind; its unrestrained forces are in perpetual warfare with each other. In one of its wild and lawless leaps, it catches a glimpse of the region of light, and is strangely enamoured of it. "There was a time," says Titus of Botsra, "when matter moved in chaos. It conceived and brought forth many powers without having itself any intuition of good. But in its struggles, it discerned the light of good, and strove to

* "Phot. Codex," 179.

† Ἀτακτον κινησιν. (Alex. Lycop., Combefils "Auctar.," p. 4.)

rise to that region in which it had no right.* The darkness, crossing its own limits, entered into contest with the light."† The system is strangely inconsistent throughout; for if matter is in reality the opposite of light, how should it feel for that which is its radical opposite, an attraction which would imply a certain affinity?

The luminous principle, in the calm region where it reigns, dreads this invasion of incoherent matter. In order to repel it, it produces by emanation, a protective power, destined to raise a boundary between the two empires‡ This protective power is called *the Mother of Life*, and is nothing else than the creative force. In its turn it gives birth to primeval man;§ it arms him with the five elements, which are water, light, air, fire and earth, that he may wage war with chaotic matter. In this gigantic struggle he loses something of his luminous nature.‖ The princes of matter devour a portion of his armour, which is the soul. Thus, when he is released from the tumults of conflict, by being introduced into the higher region of the good God, he leaves behind him particles of light which blend with matter. But that which appears a defeat is in reality a triumph, for it is just by this combination that the principle of good succeeds in tempering and subduing the chaotic forces of matter. Matter was bound, like a

* Ἐπιβῆναι τοῖς μὴ ἰδίοις ἐπιχειρεῖ. (Tit. Botsra, i. 65.)

† "Disput. Archel.," Routh, v. 19.

‡ Δύναμιν ἀποστέλλει τινὰ φυλάξουσαν τοὺς ὅρους. (Tit. Botsra, i. p. 68.)

§ Λεγομένην Μητέρα τῆς ζωῆς καὶ αὐτὴν προβεβληκέναι τὸν πρῶτον ἄνθρωπον. ("Disput.," Routh, v. 30.) Alexander of Lycopolis likened the spiritual power which conquers matter to the soul (Combefils, "Auctarium," p. 41.)

‖ "Disput. Archel.," Routh, v. 49.

wild beast, by the spiritual element it had absorbed, and the result was the production of a compound nature, which prevents the letting loose of the material powers.* The divine hero, however, does not consent to suffer the substance which has emanated from him, and which is part of himself, to perish. He seeks to disengage it by degrees, and to reabsorb it in himself.† For this purpose he produces a new Æon, which is the Holy Spirit, the organising power of creation, whose work is to set free the elements of light, buried, as it were, in matter. The Manichæans represented this entire work of defence and deliverance, by a familiar and expressive comparison. When the hunters will take a fierce lion they put a kid of the flock in a ditch; its cries attract the savage beast, who falls into the snare, while the kid is released by the shepherd.‡ The devouring lion is raging matter; the ram which allures it and reduces it to impotence, is the luminous element from the higher region; it is a treacherous bait for the great adversary, according to the expression of Theodoret.§ But it is itself to be finally saved, and this is the object of creation and of history.

We here discern again the fundamental idea of all the Gnostic systems, according to which creation is confounded with redemption. In Manichæism, however, the redemption is of God Himself, rather than of an inferior being. This luminous substance, which the good God will defend from the invasion of matter,

* Ἐδέθη ὥσπερ θηρίον . . . . γεγόνε τοίμυν μίξις και κρᾶσις. (Tit. Botsra, Bk. I. p. 68.)

† Τότε ζῶν πνεῦμα ἔκτισε τὸν κόσμον. ("Disput.," Routh, v. 51.)

‡ Ibid., v. 99. § Theodoret, "De hæretic. fabulis.," i. 25.

is confounded with His own nature. "The good principle," said the Manichæans, "created the world, not because he desired to create it, but in order to resist evil."* The world, the Cosmos, is only matter disciplined for the defence of the divine essence, for it is only organised by the transfusion of the luminous into the material element; order results from the union, and this combination is the one grand means of quieting the inferior region, which, left to itself, would be a prey to incessant and stormy dissensions. The boundary which divides the luminous from the higher sphere, is not a particular Æon, which repels, like a rock, the attempt of the powers beneath: it is rather, as in the philosophy of Aristotle, an internal force, a controlling energy, resulting from the skilful combination of contrary elements.

The mother of life and the original man, enact in Manichæism the part of Sophia in the system of Valentinus, but with less grandeur and poetry. No trace remains of the generous and ardent aspiration of the inferior Æon, who sighs after complete union with the mysterious principle of her being. We have the mere vulgar necessity of personal defence as the first principle, and an inexplicable defeat of the Æon, who is its champion. This champion is removed from the dark and stormy scene of the conflict, as is the Sophia of the Valentinians. The portion of his substance, which he leaves behind him, recalls Achamoth, that sorrowful offspring of the pangs of Wisdom. With Valentinus, at least, the redemption of Achamoth is, on the part of the first principle, a work of love, since

* Tit. Botsra, Bk. I. p. 69.

that unhappy being is distinct from himself, and is born of the rebellion of Sophia. In Manichæism the good God only redeems Himself, for the luminous substance, which is diffused in the universe, is His own substance; He seeks His own in all beings, and nothing else. Thus the system never rises to the conception of love. It is dark and cold as pantheism.

Let us now follow this work of creation and of redemption through its successive phases. The Holy Spirit, being the organising power which governs the beneficent and tranquillising union of light and darkness, and subjects it to fixed laws, begins by forming the firmament in which the higher powers of nature are joined to the luminous element.* The sun and moon are in the highest part of the firmament, and belong to the upper region, or at least these stars are the first intermediaries between it and our world. The luminous element is found at every step of the scale of beings; it is even present in the plant. It suffers acutely in being thus made subject to material bonds. This represents, according to a bold and poetic image of the Manichæans, the universal crucifixion of the Eternal Christ, whom they identify with the divine and luminous principle. "What," says St. Augustine, "is that cross of light of which the Manichæans speak? The members of God, say they, are scattered throughout the whole world, engaged in the universal conflict. They are in the stars, in herbs, in fruits. To tear up the soil by the ploughshare is to wound the members of God; so also is it to pull up a vege-

* "Disput," Routh., v. 51.

table or gather a fruit. Jesus Christ is thus crucified in the whole world."* The development of life in the world, rising from kingdom to kingdom, is a progressive enfranchisement of the divine element. Thus, only to speak of the vegetable kingdom ; it takes up a portion of the soil with its roots, then transforms itself into leaf and flower, and diffuses itself in the air, returning to its source in the sphere of light. Animal life appears, in a sense, inferior to vegetable, because it is subject to the law of reproduction; thus Mani made it to proceed directly from the powers of darkness. The ardent rays of the sun hasten the liberation of the divine element from the bosom of earth. The aim of the good principle is to deliver the soul from the fetters of evil, and to lead it to exhale itself in some way from the heart of matter.† The Manichæans had a new version of the fable of the giant Atlas; they pretended that a powerful giant, the son of matter, carried the world upon his shoulders, and that earthquakes were caused by his movements.‡ They had a strange explanation of the creation of man. According to them, the maleficent powers of matter were greatly alarmed at seeing to what an extent natural life, in its constant evolution, was losing all the divine germs contained in it. Anxious to retain these germs, that they might not fall back into a state of chaos, they produced beings who bore the impress of their spiritual nature. Satan, who is

* "Et ipse est Christus crucifixus in toto mundo." (Augustine, "Enarratio in Psalm cxl." § 12. Edit. Migne, iv. p. 1823.)

† *Ταύτην ἀντλῆσαι τροπόν τινα ἐκ τῆς ὕλης.* (Tit. Botsra, Lib. i. p. 69.) ‡ "Disput.," Routh, v. 52.

the king of these ephemeral creations, then destroyed them in order to gather together in one all these luminous particles. This being, who thus concentrates the life of the world, and who is at once soul and body, is man.* His soul is the concentration of the luminous elements scattered abroad in the universal life. His body is the material element, but is subdued and kept in subjection by the union with the spiritual. According to another Manichæan tradition, the powers of matter, after having seen in vision the primeval man, who was translated into the region of light, attempted to create a being in his likeness, and thus produced Adam, the father of our race.† But it is found in the end that the demons have miscalculated, and that in concentrating the divine life in a being who is the image of the world—a complete microcosm—they have accelerated that sort of evaporation of the light, after which there will remain only the dead body of the universe, or chaotic matter.

The divine work will consist in withdrawing man from the power of his creator, who is no other than the demon. The influence of the Gnostic sect of the Ophites is plainly recognisable in this part of the system. The fall in Eden is the starting-point of the restoration, since it breaks the yoke of the powers of darkness, personified in the God of creation. By violating their command, and gathering the fruit of knowledge, man lays the foundation of his liberty.

* "Disput.," Routh, v. 65, 66.

† Τοῦ μὲν φωτὸς εἶναι μέρος τὴν ἐν ἀνθρώποις ψυχήν, τοῦ δὲ σκότους τὸ σῶμα. (Ibid., v. 49.) Ὁρίζεται καὶ ψυχὴν ἅπασαν εἶναι μεριδος τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ σῶμα καὶ σάρκα τῆς ὕλη. (Tit. Botsra, Lib. i. 69. Comp. St. Augustine, "Contra Julian.," iii. 185, édit. Migne, x. 1325.)

The tree of knowledge of good and evil is called Jesus.* Is it not in truth the emblem of salvation, since it gives the knowledge which saves the soul?† Unhappily Eve, under the influence of the demons, leads Adam astray, and wins him over to a life of sensual indulgence. This surrender to the senses is his true fall. The Manichæans assumed towards the Old Testament the attitude of extreme Gnosticism. They used violent animadversions against the God of Israel and His law, which they declared to be implacable; they saw in His prophets, organs of the spirit of darkness. The "Dispute of Archelaus" shows that this was one of the fundamental points of their system.‡ According to Photius, Agapius, the faithful disciple of Mani, openly mocked at Moses and the prophets, and ascribed to the power of evil all that was said or done under the first covenant. The Manichæans explained the death of man by a strange fable, which was a new distortion of the myth of Sophia. They asserted that the powers of darkness, which dwelt in the firmament, once saw the image of the higher life appearing upon the features of a virgin of celestial beauty. They were at once filled with ardent love for her, and in their painful and impotent efforts to reach her, their sweat and tears fell to the ground, and engendered plagues and mortal sicknesses. Death thus originated in a fervent aspiration baffled.§ We can attach no importance to this incoherent legend. It is certain

* *Τὸ δὲ ἐν παραδείσῳ φυτὸν, ἀυτό ἐστι ὁ Ἰησοῦς.* ("Disput.," Routh, v. 62.) † Ibid., 66.

‡ *Τὴν δὲ παλαιὰν γραφὴν κωμῳδεῖ.* (Photius, "Codex," 179. Comp. Tit. Botsra, iii. p. 36. § "Disput.," Routh, v. 56, 57.

that in the view of the Manichæans, death is to man the liberation of the spiritual part, which is carried away by the moon, as by a heavenly vessel, up to the regions of eternal and unclouded light. The waxing of the moon corresponds with the moment when it opens to receive emancipated souls; its waning marks the time when it has deposited its sacred burden safe in the heavenly haven.* Without recognising moral freedom, Mani requires man to do battle with the material element which lives in him, and to strengthen his spiritual nature. He admits, like other Gnostics, a certain predetermination of nature, which establishes the hierarchy of souls. This is apparent from the terms in which he addresses himself to a female disciple, in whom he recognises the offspring of a divine race.† Salvation, in this system, can only consist in deliverance from the bonds of matter: it is accomplished at the death of every man, by the extinction of all corporeal life. We are to prepare ourselves for it, by a knowledge of the true principles and by asceticism. Mani has expressed very clearly this purely intellectual conception of salvation, in a fragment of a letter which St. Augustine has preserved. "Thou hast been inundated with light," he writes to an adept of his sect, "by learning to know what thou wast originally, from what class of beings thou dost emanate, by understanding that which mingles itself with all bodies, with all substances, and diffuses

* Πλοῖα γὰρ ἤτοι πορθμεῖα εἶναι λεγει τοὺς δύο φωστῆρας. ("Disput.," Routh, v. 54.)

† "Quia es divinæ stirpis fructus." (St. Augustine, "Opus imperfect.," iii. 172. Edit. Migne, x. 1318.)

itself through all species. Just as souls are born of other souls, so does the bodily element proceed from the body. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Spirit is the soul which proceeds from the soul, as the flesh from the flesh."*

When redemption is once confounded with the mere evolution of creation, the part of the Saviour necessarily becomes insignificant. He comes simply to reveal to us the true idea of things, and to stimulate us to saintly self-mortifications; He is, like Mithra, the spirit of the sun, the primary representative of the luminous principle; He is that very primeval man, who entered into conflict with darkness, and who was separate from all material life; His birth and His death alike are but semblances without reality, and His body itself is a phantom. "The nature of light," says Mani, "being simple and true, it could not enter into contact with the material essence."† In Jesus the light took the form of flesh, becoming as it were its impalpable shadow, but incapable of suffering, for it would be absurd to speak of the crucifixion of the shadow of the flesh.‡ The Son of light revealed His essence upon the Mount of Transfiguration.§ He appeared in human form without being man; he never knew the humiliation of human birth.‖ St. Augustine declares in his "Con-

* "Splendida reddita es agnoscendo." (Saint Augustine, "Opus imperfect.," iii. 172. Edit. Migne, x. 1318.)

† Οὐ γάρ οὐσιας ἥψατο σαρκὸς ἀλλὰ ὁμοιωματι καὶ σχήματι σαρκὸς ἐσκιάσθη. (Fragments of Mani in Fabricius, "Biblioth. Græca," Vol. viii. p. 315.) ‡ Fabricius, *loc. cit.* § Ibid.

‖ "Apparuit quidem in hominis specie nec tamen fuit homo." ("Disput.," Routh, i. 169.)

fessions," that at the time when he was a Manichæan, he regarded Jesus only as the son of the sun.*

The world is destined gradually to lose all that it contains of the divine; at the end of time the primeval man will appear; matter will then be only an inert mass consumed by fire, and the souls which shall have lost their divine substance by succumbing to the flesh, will be confounded with it, while the ascetic saints will triumph in the fulness of divine light.† This cannot be the final utterance of the system, for matter, as it had no beginning, cannot consistently have any end. We may suppose then that the same evolution will recommence, and that this succession of mythical facts represents the successive phases, or to speak more correctly, the permament laws, of universal life. It is certain that the doctrine of metempsychosis entered into the Manichæan theory;‡ the souls which had not preserved their purity saw awaiting them a series of ordeals through which they were to attain final deliverance. The notion of moral freedom, and the idea of providence, were wholly absent from this grossly dualistic system.§ Mani supported his doctrine by an exegesis which carried the arbitrary to the furthest limits. We know that he rejected without scruple the whole of the Old Testament. In the New, he did not allow himself to be fettered by anything in the letter; was he not the Paraclete, the depositary of the higher and final revelations? He

* "Ipsum quoque Salvatorem nostrum tanquam de massa lucidissimæ molis porrectum ad nostram salutem, ita putabam." "Confess. Sancti August.," Lib. vi. x. 20. Edit. Migne, i. 706.

† "Disput.," Routh, v. 67, 68. ‡ Photius, "Codex," 179.

§ "Tit. Botsra," Lib. ii. p. 101.

adopted Christian words, while he totally altered their meaning.* The sect made use of several apocryphal writings, which it interpreted so as to support its own tenets.† Morality was with the Manichæans identical with asceticism. They professed contempt for a life of laborious industry, and, in this respect, diverged from the oldest traditions of the "Avesta," which regarded fruitful toil in every department as the holy work of Ormuz. The disciple of Mani was to pass through material life without touching anything that enhanced or embellished existence. "When they are about to eat bread," says Epiphanius, "they first pray and pronounce these words: 'I have not gathered in nor ground the grain, neither have I sent it to the mill. Another has done these things, and has brought thee to me. I eat thee without reproaches, for he who reaps shall himself be reaped, and he who sends corn to the mill shall himself be ground to powder.'"‡ It was not possible to express more clearly the interdiction of all work, lest unwitting injury should be done to the luminous particles diffused throughout the material universe. The sect had two stages of initiation. The mere hearers were not admitted to the sacred mysteries, and might continue their common life.§ The elect, on the contrary, broke all the bonds of society and of marriage, gave themselves up to macerations of the body, and submitted to three rites,

* Photius, "Codex," 179.

† The Manicheans used chiefly the "Acta Thomæ," the Περίοδοι of Lucius Charinus, and the "Acti Pauli et Theclæ."

‡ Epiphanius, "Hæres.," 66. The union of the sexes was vehemently denounced. "Disput.," Routh, v. 77.

§ Augustine, "Epistol. Class.," iv. ep. 136, 2.

which were the seal of perfectness.* The sign of the mouth indicated pureness of language and abstinence from all animal food; the sign of the hand implied a renunciation of all manual labour, which might enrich and adorn an accursed world; and, lastly, the sign of the bosom—*signaculum sinus*—was a vow of perpetual chastity.

The Manichæans regarded baptism as a purification of the defilements of material birth; it was, however, only in exceptional use among them.† They set apart the Sabbath for fasting. Their great festival was the anniversary of the death of Mani, which they celebrated by a sort of mystic passover. A splendid seat, covered with precious fabrics, was set up in the midst of the building in which they assembled; this was to bring to mind the teaching of the master and the doctrine of deliverance which he had preached.‡ The Manichæans had no temples, properly so called; prayer and the singing of hymns constituted a great part of their worship. Their hymns, judging by the fragments which have come down to us, consisted chiefly of brilliant descriptions of the abode of light and of its inhabitants, the children of the sun.§

Such is this system, which exerted a far more important influence than is accounted for by its logical or religious value. It presents, with a degree of clearness which must have contributed to its success, the

* "Quæ sunt ista signacula? Oris certè et manuum et sinus." Augustine, "De Morib. Manich.," Lib. ii. c. 10.

† Neander, "Kirch. Geschichte," i. p. 568, 569.

‡ Augustine, "Contra Epist. Fondament.," c. 8.

§ See Basnages, work quoted. Vol. ii. p. 701-728.

residue of all the speculative errors, which had from the first attempted to transform Christianity.* It is evident that its triumph would have led to a restoration of Persian dualism, pure and simple, which would not have differed much from the mysteries of Mithra, and that the Pagan idea, in its most essential element —the glorification of nature—would have been emphatically reasserted by its means. We may observe, in conclusion, that there is no more decisive refutation of Gnosticism, than the *reductio ab absurdum* which results from its own free development.

* Our exposition of the Manichæan system sufficiently shows how false is the hypothesis on which Baur has based his book on the subject; namely, that Mani had no thought of connecting his doctrine with Christianity.

CHAPTER III.

JUDAISING HERESY IN THE SECOND AND THIRD CENTURIES.

§ I. *The Elkesaites and the Ebionites.*

WHILE nothing could be more untrue to fact than to identify primitive Christianity with Judaism, and to regard as simple progress that which was in reality a vast revolution, it is certain that very close bonds attached the new religion to that of the Old Testament, by which it had been initiated and proclaimed. These bonds might be either broken altogether, or clenched so tightly as to arrest all further development, either error being fraught with fatal consequences. While Gnosticism tends to place a deep gulf between the two Testaments, Judaising heresy seeks to confound them; but even in its reactionary movement against Gnosticism, it comes under its influence, and produces a strangely deformed and perverted Judaism, upon which has passed the blasting, withering breath of oriental dualism.

From the times of the Apostles, there are three distinctly-marked sections in the Judæo-Christian community. The first remains closely attached to the nucleus of apostolic Christianity; it is, indeed, an im-

portant branch of it, and can claim the highest antiquity, for it dates from the upper chamber at Jerusalem; its representative and head was James, the brother of the Lord, and it continued invariably faithful to the wise and conciliatory decisions of the Council of Jerusalem. It did not cease to live in perfect harmony with that freer section known as the Pauline party, which, after all, represented more faithfully the thought of Christ, by putting the new wine into a new vessel. The second type of Judæo-Christianity is the narrow and intractable Pharisaic school, which was eager to transfer to the Church all the practices and prejudices of Judaism, making circumcision a necessary condition of salvation, and endeavouring to bring all the converts from paganism into bondage under legal forms. St. Paul had no more determined and deadly enemies than these, either in Galatia or in Greece.

The third party was the eclectic school, which, according to the current tendency of the time, mingled oriental with Jewish ideas. At Corinth, as in Crete, at Colosse and at Ephesus, the great Apostle had to contend strenuously against a false spiritualism, which identified evil with matter, forbade marriage, and rejected the resurrection of the body, denying first the resurrection of Jesus Himself. Cerinthus was the fullest exponent of this bastard Judaism, which united and combined the gravest errors of the time; and we have seen how St. John had this in view in almost all his writings, because it was the gravest danger then threatening the Church.

These three schools of Judæo-Christianity reappeared in the second century, but strangely modified

by the course of events. The destruction of Jerusalem made a still more important revolution in the religious than in the political sphere.* Moderate Judæo-Christianity saw in the overthrow of the Temple, the condemnation of the ancient worship, and began accordingly to seek fusion with the Church composed of Gentile converts. This coalescent movement, which commenced at Pella, where the Christians had taken refuge, went on much more rapidly during the short and violent reign of Barcocheba, who shed in floods the blood of those who were called Nazarenes, and who excited, more even than the Romans, the animosity of the Jewish fanatics. The eclectic faction of Judæo-Christianity only escaped proscription by an adherence to the synagogue, which was equivalent to a rupture with the Church. This rupture was inevitable when, after the building of Ælia Capitolina by Adrian, upon the very site of Jerusalem, an imperial decree forbade any adherents of Judaism to dwellin a city, all the local associations of which would have been incitements to revolt. Thus, the Church which quickly established itself in the new city, was composed, in great part, of Christian converts from paganism; to these a considerable number of Christians previously belonging to the Judaising party, attracted by the love of country, joined themselves, abandoning the observance of their ancient worship. The Jewish Christians, who remained faithful to their national customs, no longer had, in the eyes of the Church, the prestige of representing the great tradition of Palestine, since they no longer inhabited sacred

* See "Early Years of Christianity," p. 366 and following.

soil; moreover, they could no more appeal to the decrees of the Council of Jerusalem, since the destruction of the Temple had in fact abrogated them, rendering impossible the greater part of the observances of the ceremonial law, and in particular all that related to the sacrifices. To seek to perpetuate the practice of Judaism under such circumstances, was to transform a transitional measure into a permanent and universal principle. In this way a conflict became inevitable, and observances which had been legitimate a few years before, were transmuted by degrees into positive heresy. The moderate school of Judæo-Christianity was not proscribed, however, till much later, at the time when the union of the Church and the Empire, and the decisions of the first great Councils, superseded liberty by uniformity. The fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries confounded, in one common sentence of reprobation, all the sections of Judæo-Christianity, taking no account of their differences, however important. It was not so in the second and third centuries: moderate Judæo-Christianity was still in existence in the time of Justin Martyr, who carefully distinguished it from the second school, which we have called the Pharisaic. If he thought it his own duty to receive circumcision, he nevertheless acknowledged that no such observance was obligatory on the converts from paganism, and, consequently, that it was not indispensable to salvation. Justin declares plainly that the Judæo-Christian of this school has his part in eternal life as well as other believers. He says: "He will be saved, if he does not compel Gentiles by birth, who have been circum-

cised in heart, to observe the Mosaic law."* He speaks differently of the Judaisers, who place all the legal observances above the Gospel. "As for the Jews," says Justin, "who, professing to believe in Christ, would yet compel the converts from paganism to adhere to the whole law of Moses, under pain of perdition, I cannot recognise them as belonging to the Church."†

The name of Nazarenes was given to the moderate Judæo-Christians, but they gradually became confounded with the second school, that from which Justin had distinguished them, and which was characterised by its exclusive Judaism. This, in its turn, was, to a large extent, absorbed in the third school, for the reasons we have indicated. Epiphanius, however, gives it a separate place, side by side, with the half-Gnostic Ebionites of the "Clementines;"‡ it preserved its distinctness, like a little streamlet by the side of a broad current, owing to its peculiar and strongly-marked colour. It involved the Nazarenes in its own condemnation; so that, in the time of Irenæus, moderate Judaism, which, for a long time, had been regarded as accredited by the Jerusalem Council, ceased to occupy any place in the spot which had been the nursery of the Church.§ That which

* *Σωθήσεται ὁ τοιοῦτος ἐὰν μὴ τοὺς ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους. . . . πείθειν ἀγωνίζεται ταὐτὰ αὐτῷ φυλάσσειν.* (Justin, "Dial. contra Tryph.," 47. "Opera," p. 265, 266.)

† *Ἐὰν δὲ οἱ ἀπὸ τοῦ γένους τοῦ ὑμετέρου πιστεύειν λέγοντες ἐπὶ τοῦτον τὸν χριστον ἐκ παντὸς κατὰ τὸν διὰ Μωσέως διαταχθέντα νόμον αναγκάζωσι ζῆν τοὺς ἐθνῶν πιστεύοντας. . . . τούτους οὐκ ἀποδέχομαι.* (Ibid.)

‡ Epiphanius, "Advers. Hæres.," 29. Augustine, "De baptism. contra Donat.," vii. 1, and Jerome, "Ad Esaiam," edit. Migne, iv. 357, speaks also of the Nazarenes.

§ Irenæus, in his list of heresies, mentions only the Ebionites, confounding the Nazarenes with them.

tended most to alienate the Church from Judæo-Christianity, was its categorical repudiation of the divinity of Jesus Christ.* It held very extreme millenarian views, and of the Gospels accepted only that of Matthew in the Hebrew text.†

The third school—that which is imbued with oriental Gnosticism—excites far more attention, and provokes far more discussion, than the other two sections of Judæo-Christianity, because it is not a mere phantom of the past, reviving an old controversy virtually closed by St. Paul, and at this time practically unimportant. It was in harmony with the spirit of the time, and shared in the favour so readily accorded in that day to everything bearing the impress of theosophy. It arose first in the same countries which had given birth to Essenism, on the grandly desolate shores of the Dead Sea, where everything speaks of sadness and the curse;—in that desert of Judæa, which, in the language of a great writer, seems to have kept solemn silence ever since it heard the voice of Jehovah. The strange and melancholy sect which had separated from official Mosaism, under the same sense of the overwhelming pressure of existence, which in India produced the fanatic asceticism of the Buddhists, naturally received a fresh impulse, after the terrible calamities of the Roman Conquest.‡ These anchorites alone remained

* Περὶ χριστοῦ ψιλὸν ἄνθρωπον νομίζουσιν. (Epiphanius, "Contra Hæres.," xxix.)

† St. Jerome, "In Esaiam," Lib. xviii. c. 66. (Vol. iv. p. 672.)

‡ I cannot subscribe to Ritschl's opinion ("Altcatholisch. Kirche," 2nd edit., p. 179, adopted and elaborated by M. Réville "Nouvelle Revue de Théologie," Vol. v. 3rd issue,) as to the purely Hebraic origin of Essenism. It is impossible to see in the prohibition of marriage and the suppression of the sacrifices, a simple

unharmed in the midst of so many reeking ruins, for having already abandoned animal sacrifices, they lost nothing by the abolition of the Levitical worship. Had they not still the most fitting altar for the mystic offerings of their prayers in that land of death, where nature, barren and joyless, seems herself the sternest of ascetic votaries, on the borders of those gloomy regions, where, according to the dreams of the Buddhists, all tone, colour, form, everything that has life in it, dies away? The excited Judæo-Christians, who took refuge in the wilds of Judæa, would inevitably assimilate with all that remained of Essenism; this was the only bond by which they could yet attach themselves to Judaism, since they found in the practices of this party a substitute for temple and altar. From this union sprang a singular sect, called the Elkesaites, who, in their turn, were to give birth to Gnostic Ebionitism.* The name Elkesaites was derived from the supposed founder of the sect, who, according to vague traditions, received, in the third year of Trajan's reign, a mysterious book, containing the true doctrine.† This book was said to have been committed to him by a gigantic angel, accompanied by a woman,

development of priestly purism. We here trace an oriental influence, the more easily to be accepted that there is no need to suppose any transplantation of ideas, whether from Alexandria or India. The whole atmosphere was saturated with these elements of Gnosticism and Asceticism.

* With reference to the sect of the Elkesaites, see "Phil.," ix. 17, 18; Epiphanius, "Contra Hæres.," xix.; Ritschl, "Altcatholisch. Kirche," p. 231. Eusebius, "H. E.," vi. 38, quotes a fragment of a homily of Origen, delivered at Cæsarea against this sect.

† Origen (apud Eusebius "H. E.," vi. 38), Epiphanius xix. reduce the celestial origin of this book to a simply prophetic character The "Philosophoumena" alone speak of the angel.

whose stature in like manner surpassed all ordinary proportions.* The angel is intended for the Son of God, the woman for the Holy Spirit.† Evidently, we have in this legend a rough outline of the dualism which forms the basis of Gnosticism, and which we shall find fully developed in the "Clementines." The person of Elxaï belongs itself to metaphysical mythology. The name indeed signifies hidden power, and is made symbolical of the mysterious influence of the Divinity, or the Holy Spirit, from whom all revelation proceeds.‡ The doctrine of the Elkesaites is still in an indistinct and undeveloped state. Oriental Gnosticism and Jewish or Christian elements have not yet become thoroughly amalgamated with it. From Gnosticism is borrowed the conception of a great masculine and feminine duality, placed at the zenith of the universe. The prohibition of animal food is also derived from Oriental asceticism. The celebration of baptism reveals the influence of Christianity, but this rite loses all moral significance; it becomes a magical ceremony, which purifies from all sin, even the greatest.§ "O ye who have committed adultery!" say the adherents of this sect, "or who have prophesied falsely, if you will be converted and receive the remission of sins, you will obtain peace, and your lot will be with the just, if, after having heard our books, you plunge into

* Ὑπὸ αγγέλου, εἶναι δὲ σὺν αὐτῷ καὶ θήλειαν. ("Phil.," ix. 13.)

† Τὸν μέν ἄρσεν.ι υἱὸν εἶναι τοῦ θεοῦ, τήν δέ θήλεαν καλεῖσθαι ἅγιον πνεῦμα. (Ibid., ix. 13.)

‡ Epiphanius, "Contra Hæres.," xix.

§ "Phil.," ix. 15. Βαπτίσματι λαμβάνειν ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν. (Ibid., ix. 13. Comp. Eusebius, vi. 38.)

the water, clothed in all your garments."* This baptism is not merely administered in the name of the Father and the Son, it is further accompanied with the invocation of seven witnesses, which are heaven, the water, holy spirits, the angels of prayer, oil, salt, and earth.† Clearly these seven spirits are the equivalent of the Holy Spirit, whose name was invoked, after that of the Father and the Son, in the ordinary baptismal formula. It follows that the elements of the world form part of the Deity, and we are thus brought back to Oriental naturalism. The oil and the salt point to the communion as it was observed in this sect. Christ is only a mere man. He is nevertheless born of a virgin, but He has appeared many times in history under various forms.‡ It is impossible to form any clear idea of His mission, unless He is one of the manifestations of the giant-angel, who brought the book of revelation. Probably the sect shared in the anthropomorphic ideas of the Jewish mysteries, and supposed a complete resemblance between man and the Son of God. The Jewish impress is seen in the maintenance of circumcision and of legal observances, so far at least as they were compatible with the condition of things after the overthrow of the Temple. Marriage was held in high esteem.§ The sect was naturally addicted to the chimeras of astrology and magic. It made no pretension to Christian heroism, for it

* "Phil.," ix. 15.

† Χρῶνται δὲ ἐπαοιδαῖς καὶ βαπτίσμασιν ἐπὶ τῇ τῶν στοιχείων ὁμολογίᾳ. Ibid., x. 29.)

‡ Ibid., ix. 14. According to Epiphanius, they called Christ *the Great King*. (Epiphanius, "Hæres.," xix.)

§ Ibid. Δεῖν κατὰ νόμων ζῆν. ("Phil.," ix. 14.)

attached no importance to apostasy.* Incoherent as it was, this doctrine lived for a considerable length of time, and endeavoured to disseminate itself beyond its obscure nursery, for Origen met one of its missionaries at Cæsarea in 231, and St. Hippolytus found another in Rome at the commencement of the third century.

Gnostic Ebionitism, which had its origin in the sect of the Elkesaïtes, carries the Oriental and ascetic tendency to its furthest limits. It gives it an elaborate and piquant form, well adapted to please sickly imaginations, and minds greedy of empty speculations.† The very name of this sect bespeaks its character. Some have sought to trace in it the name of its founder, but Ebio, like Elxaï, can be found in the nimbus of legend alone. The meaning of the term is plain. In Hebrew it signifies *poor*. The Ebionites were then called *the poor*, not, as has been asserted, on account of the poverty of their conception of Christ, whom they regarded as a mere man,‡ but because they pretended to realise the ideal of the beatitudes, that poverty of spirit, that absolute renunciation of all things, which was inseparable in their view from the most exaggerated asceticism. The name may have been sometimes given in Palestine to all the Christians indiscriminately,§ but after the rupture of the exclusive Judæo-Christians with the Church, it was applied to

* Epiphanius, "Contra Hæres.," xix. Origen apud Eusebius, "H. E.," vi. 38.

† On Ebionitism, see Irenæus, "Adv. Hæres.," i. 26; Epiphanius, "Hæres.," xxx.; "Phil.," vii. 34; Ritschl, work quoted, p. 204.

‡ This was Gieseler's idea ("Tschirner Archiv.," iv. 307).

§ Minut. Felix, "Octav.," 36.

the latter only, and perhaps also by some of the Fathers to the Nazarenes, a sect which might easily be confounded by the ill-informed observer with those of more pronounced opinions. We shall indicate the general features of the Ebionite doctrine before its more learned elaboration in the "Clementines." According to Irenæus and Hippolytus, its adherents admitted that the world had been created by God.* They thus dispensed with the intermediary link of the Demiurgus, but made no true return to Christian theism, as is clear from the pantheism of the "Clementines." They were agreed as to the necessity of circumcision, and the observance of the law.† St. Paul was the object of their animadversion, and they treated him as an apostate. They formally denied the divinity of Jesus Christ, and regarded Him as a mere man, born of Joseph and Mary. His perfect piety had raised Him to the high dignity He had attained, while there was no derogation of the law of Moses. Each one of His disciples therefore, by following in His footsteps, might hope to become in his turn a Christ.‡

According to the testimony of Origen, some of the Ebionites admitted the supernatural birth of Jesus, but without paying Him homage as the Son of God.§ It is probable that Epiphanius has applied to them indiscriminately the system of the "Clementines." We must receive, therefore, with much reservation, that which he attributes to the sect as a whole. It cannot

* Τὸν κόσμον ὑπὸ τοῦ ὄντως θεοῦ γεγονέναι. ("Phil.," vii. 34.)
† Ἕξειν Ἰουδαϊκοῖς ζῶσι. (Ibid., vii. 35.)
‡ Δύνεσθαι χριστοὺς γενέσθαι. (Ibid., vii. 34.)
§ Origen, "Contra Cels.," ii. 1.

be denied, however, that the theosophic development assumed by it was in harmony with its original tendency. It is certain that the Ebionites very early delighted in the elaborate metaphysical theories of Essenism, and entered into speculations as to the relations between the world and God. In all likelihood the transcendental mysticism of Judaism, which already contained the germs of the Kabbala, exerted a great influence over them. They derived from it the notion of the ideal and eternal man,—that Adam Cadmon, who is the very representative of God.

§ II. *The "Clementines."*

The development of the great Gnostic systems gave a powerful impulse to Ebionitism. The visions of the Elkesaïtes tended in the same direction, and under these combined influences there was produced an entire literature, half-Romanesque, half-metaphysical, of which we have the oldest and most authentic expression in the "Clementine Homilies," written about the year 150,—not at Rome, as the Tübingen school has asserted, but in Oriental Syria, which had become the meeting-point of Jewish ideas with the phantasmagoria of Gnosticism. Let us attempt to give an idea of this singular book before we endeavour to unfold the system it contains, and to mark the place it occupies in the history of heresies.*

* This name, the "Clementines," comprehends an entire literature, having one theme—the pretended relations of Clement of Rome with the Apostle Peter. Christian antiquity recognised the

The "Homilies" are prefaced by a letter from Peter to James, the Lord's brother, notifying him of the despatch of the genuine account of his disputes with Simon Magus, and urging him to transmit his teaching only to intimate disciples, and thus to found a secret tradition. This letter is followed by the attestation that all had really transpired as said by the Apostle. Then comes an epistle from Clement of Rome to James, announcing the death of Peter, and containing his dying wish for the transmission of his charge to Clement.

These three documents have, as we shall see presently, a very important bearing on the ecclesiastical question, for, in spite of their heretical origin, they reveal a sacerdotal vein of thought, which found only

following works, which may be all placed in the same category: 1st. The "Homilies," of which we possess the complete text, since the discovery made by Dressel, of Homily xx., in a manuscript of the Vatican Library. It is from this edition I quote. 2nd. The "Recognitiones," a Latin translation of Rufinus, the original of which is lost. 3rd. The "Epitome," published first by Turnebus (1553), and afterwards by Cotelier. This is a meagre extract from the "Homilies." 4th. Several orthodox or expurgated editions of the "Homilies" and "Recognitiones." We cannot enter into the voluminous discussion as to the respective dates of the "Homilies" and "Recognitiones," and as to the place of their composition, Baur and his school will hear of no place but Rome for their authorship, in order that they may make these writings play the part of conciliation in the fusion of the Jewish and Pauline elements, from which they hold the Catholic Church to have resulted. They affirm also the priority of the "Recognitiones." We shall confine ourselves to sustaining the contrary opinion on these two main points. We admit with Ulhorn, in his excellent monograph upon the "Clementines" ("Homil. Recogund.," Tubingen, 1854), that the "Homilies," which themselves show some traces of interpolation, are anterior to the "Recognitiones" for the following reasons:—1st. The quotations from the canonical Gospels in the "Clementines" are more free, less textual than in the "Recognitiones." 2nd. The letter of Clement which heads the "Homilies"

too susceptible a medium in the Church. The "Homilies" themselves turn upon the marvellous incidents of the meeting between Clement and Peter, and upon the memorable dispute between the Apostle and Simon Magus.

The commencement of the book is very fine. It describes eloquently the sufferings of Clement, when, consumed with the thirst for truth, he went about seeking it at the doors of all the schools, till at Alexandria he met Barnabas, who led him to St. Peter in Palestine. Arrived at Cæsarea, he was speedily convinced by the Apostle, who proposes to him that he shall assist at the great public controversies which are about to take place between himself and the leader of heresy—the famous Simon of Samaria.

is an evident recasting of the close of the third homily. Now, according to Rufinus ("Ep. ad Gaudentium"), this formed part of the "Recognitiones." These, then, were themselves a reconstruction of the "Homilies." 3rd. The Simon of the "Homilies" resembles in all points the Simon of the "Philosophoumena." In the "Recognitiones" his doctrine is a confused medley, making large use of the Roman tradition, which was of much later date than that preserved by St. Hippolytus. 4th. The doctrine of the "Homilies" is uniform and consistent with itself; that of the "Recognitiones" is without coherence, and is dependent on the earlier type. As to the place of their composition, there is nothing in the "Homilies" to suggest Rome. The analogies with *Elkesaism* are obvious, and point to the same birthplace,—namely, to Oriental Syria. It is certain that the "Clementines" as a whole were of an earlier date than Origen (235 A.D.), for in his commentary on Matthew he borrows from them, if not in words at least in ideas (Orig., "Ad Matth.," xxvi. 6). The precise date of the "Homilies" is subsequent to Marcion (150), since their polemics are directed against him. The date of the "Recognitiones" cannot have been earlier than the year 170, since it contains a fragment of Bardesanes' book, "De fato," which, according to Eusebius, was extant at that time ("H. E.," iv. 30). We are thus brought to the year 180 for the later writing, and may fix the former ten years earlier.

Peter employs the time gained by the adjournment of this debate, to instruct Clement in the nature of true prophecy, on the authority of the Scriptures, and on the errors which are blended with truth in the sacred books. The "Clementines" contain two great controversies between the Apostle and the heretic, the one at Cæsarea, which lasts three days and turns mainly upon the interpretation of the Bible; the other at Laodicea, upon lying visions, upon the supreme God, and the nature of good. In the interval, other discussions on Paganism, on astrology, and on the devil, are raised by various speakers. All these discussions are held in the different towns where Peter is represented as carrying on his apostolic mission, founding Churches, baptising converts, appointing bishops, and ever in pursuit of Simon, who—worthy founder of Gnosticism—seems, like his doctrines, perpetually to elude the seeker. In these wanderings, Clement meets with his parents, of whom he had long lost all traces; his mother receives holy baptism at Laodicea; his brothers were already among Peter's disciples, though he had not known it. His father offers more resistance. Clement is himself the subject of a very singular adventure. Simon, by his sorceries, has given him an extraordinary resemblance to himself; but he is caught in his own snare, for Peter sends the false Simon to Antioch, where heresy had gained much ground, to make a sort of public abjuration, which all the witnesses ascribe to the magician himself. The apostle of the "Clementines" does not scruple thus to use a pious fraud.

It is in this framework, adorned not unskilfully according to the taste of the time, that the system of Ebionite-Gnosticism unfolds its endless intricacies. That which first of all impresses the reader is a certain expansion of Judaism. Just as Paganism, before becoming extinct, endeavoured to renew its youth by borrowing from Christianity, in the mysteries of Mithra for example, so the Judaising tendency strives to catch the Gospel character of universality. It will abate nothing in reality from its pretensions, but it will cloak them under a Christian garb. Intractable in substance, it is ready to make concessions in form, and does not hesitate to substitute baptism for circumcision, doubtless under the influence of the sect of the Elkesaites. But it rejects, none the less, all that constitutes the originality of the new religion, the doctrine of grace in particular, in order to substitute for it a legal system. Thus it directs its most severe assaults against the great apostle of the Gentiles, who is evidently intended in Simon Magus. In fact, Peter in the seventeenth Homily, occupies exactly the stand-point taken by those Judaising teachers of Corinth and Galatia, who refused to Paul the title of apostle, on the ground that he had not seen Jesus Christ with his own eyes in the days of His flesh, and could appeal only to the vision on the road to Damascus. "Thou dost exalt thyself," says Simon to Peter, "affirming that thou hast a true understanding of the words of the Master, because thou hast seen Him with thine eyes, and heard Him with thine ears, and that he who has only had a vision or a dream cannot have the same assurance. But thou dost err, for it is not enough to

have heard any one in order to have a full assurance. It may be asked if one who presents himself to us in a human form may not deceive us? A vision, on the contrary, is a direct revelation of the Deity." "He who believes in a vision, or in an apparition, or a dream," replies the apostle, "is sure of nothing, for it may be he has only seen a demon or a lying spirit, which feigns to be that it is not."*

It is moreover obvious that Simon Magus in many respects recalls Marcion, for the "Clementines" are directed essentially against his system; but as Marcion claims to be a disciple of St. Paul, his doctrine is virtually assailed in the person of the great apostle. He is then constantly the object of Peter's attacks.

The fundamental principle of the "Clementines" is the identity of Christianity with Judaism. There is only one Divine religion, ever the same in substance, which from Adam to Jesus has been perpetuated in the world. "Both doctrines," says Peter, "are one.† God accepts alike the believer in either." This religion has had as its organs the great prophets, whose testimony is preserved in Holy Scripture, but not uncorruptedly, for false prophecy, always at war with the true, has found means to introduce lying oracles into the Book of God.‡ It cannot therefore be accepted without reserve. We must be able to distinguish between error and truth. The Scriptures contain much that is false about God. Paganism is absolutely bad. It had no conception whatever of the

* "Homil.," xvii. 13, 14.

† Μιᾶς γὰρ δὲ ἀμφοτέρων διδασκαλίας οὔσης. (Ibid., viii. 6.)

‡ Πολλὰ γὰρ ψευδῆ κατὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ προσέλαβον αἱ γραφαὶ λόγῳ τούτῳ. (Ibid., ii. 38.)

Deity, and lost itself in darkness.* Nevertheless, by a strange inconsistency, a certain sense of things divine is accorded to the human soul. It can discern and hail the true divine prophecy by a rapid and spontaneous intuition. "Truth," says Peter, "is deposited in germ in our heart."†

The "Clementines" bear the impress of the purely intellectual character of Gnosticism. Religion is only teaching, prophecy, never redemption; it is a divine word, not a divine work. Jesus Christ is a teacher. He is the true Prophet, not a Saviour. Truth can only be found by the true prophet of truth. The true prophet is he who knows all things and all thoughts, and who is without sin.‡

He came to dissipate the dark clouds which hung about His house, and to fill it with the pure light of day, not to rebuild it. His perfect holiness is admitted, but He is none the less shorn of His divinity. He Himself is said to have declined this high dignity, "The Lord did not set Himself forth as God."§ He is not, however, a man like any other man. He has appeared on various occasions in history under different names. He is the ideal man, the primeval man, realising perfectly the image of God, the Adam of Paradise, who was the great manifestation of true prophecy, which is identical with spiritual power, or the Son of God. This true prophecy was manifested first partially by Moses, then completely in Jesus, who

* "Homil.," ii. 7. † Ibid., xvii. 18.

‡ Προφήτης δὲ ἀληθής ἐστιν ὁ πάντα πάντοτε εἰδώς, ἀναμάρτητος. (Ibid., iii. 11.)

§ Οὔτε ἑαυτὸν Θεὸν εἶναι ἀνηγόρευσεν. (Ibid., xvi. 15.)

is its most perfect representative since Adam, or rather who is Adam himself. We quote the very text of the "Clementines": "Piety is evidenced pre-eminently in the recognition of the Spirit of Christ in the man formed by God at the commencement of this economy. Under various forms and names,* He has come down through all the ages, till at length He obtains repose, and receives the anointing of the Divine love, in recompense for the work which He has accomplished. He it is who has been the universal ruler."

This identification of a slightly Christianised Judaism with ideal humanity, gave the basis for the universality of the "Clementines," without making any real concession to the essential principles of the Gospel. Salvation was always connected with legal observances. The substitution of baptism for circumcision was only a change of form. The Christian sacrament was celebrated on purely Jewish principles, since it incorporated the convert with the people of God by an outward act in the same way as circumcision. The notion of pardon and of justifying faith was merged in that of works. "God has granted both to the Hebrews and to the Gentiles," says Peter, in the "Clementines," "the faculty of believing in the masters of truth. Each has been able by his own judgment to perform good works, and the recompense is in justice awarded to the doers. They would have had no need either of Moses or of Jesus Christ, if they had been willing themselves to be guided by their own reason."† There could be no more explicit denial

* Μορφὰς ἀλλάσσων τὸν αἰῶνα τρέχει. ("Homil.," iii. 20.)

† Ibid., viii. 5.

of the fall, and the necessity of redemption. It is always a frigid and false pharisaic virtue, which claims heaven as its reward, while allowing that the pains of the other life will cover the arrears of the debt. Chastisement is enough to effect deliverance.* Devotion to vain observances will outweigh the eternal claims of morality. Religion is a matter of rites and ceremonies; only the necessities of the time and the influence of Essenism have modified the ritual. Ablutions take the place of sacrifices, but the principle remains the same. It is still the sort of bargaining which will purchase, not accept, the gifts of God. "The Divine religion," we read in the "Clementines," "consists in these points: to worship God alone, to believe only in the prophet of the truth, to receive baptism for the forgiveness of sins, to be thus born again in the purifying stream of saving water;† to abstain from the table of demons,—that is to say, from meats offered to idols, from beasts strangled or slain by other beasts, or still holding the blood; to live in purity, and to perform ablutions after the sexual relations. Women are bound to observe carefully the purifications prescribed by the law. All are to be sober, to do good, to avoid injustice, to look for life eternal from the Almighty God, and to obtain His favour by incessant prayers and supplications." Charity and forgiveness of sins find no place in this meagre morality. The "Clementines" thus openly assail the doctrine of St. Paul, as well

* "Homil.," xi. 16.

† Εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν **βαπτισθῆναι, ἀναγεννηθῆναι θεῷ** διὰ τοῦ σώζοντος ὕδατος. (Ibid., vii. 8.)

as the exaggerated interpretation put upon it by Marcion in his vehement opposition to Judaism.

The speculative part of the system is especially directed against the positive dualism of the famous Gnostic. The "Clementines" endeavour to get rid of the Demiurgus, and to formulate a rigid monotheism. They do not succeed, because they thus abandon the moral ground, and have recourse to theosophy, to explain the origin of evil. The cardinal point of the "Clementines" is the unity of God. "Know before all things that His power is shared with none."* This one God bears no resemblance to the bottomless abyss of the Valentinians, nor to the ineffable *One* of Philo. He has a bodily form, and as all form must have its limitation, He is enclosed in the vast void as in His dwelling-place.† He is the heart of the universe, from which all proceeds, to which all returns.‡ If the "Clementines" insist upon this strange theory of the form of God, it is to establish one of their favourite doctrines—the perfect resemblance of man to his Creator. It is again for the same reason that the Divine wisdom, which is, as it were, the productive virtue of the Most High,—"His creative hand opened to give birth to universal life,"—is assimilated to the female element.§ Thus God, like the first man, contains in Himself the male and female element. This is the basis of that law of duality which applies to the whole uni-

* Πρὸ *πάντων ἐννοοῦ ὅτι οὐδεὶς αὐτῷ συνάρχει.* ("Homil.," iii. 37.)

† *Θεοῦ τόπος ἐστὶ τὸ μὴ ὄν.* (Ibid., xvii. 8.) ‡ Ibid., xvii. 9.

§ Ἡ *δὲ σοφία ἥνωται μὲν ὡς ψυχὴ τῷ θεῷ, ἐκτείνεται δὲ ἀπ αὐτοῦ, ὡς χεὶρ, δημιουργοῦσα τὸ πᾶν· διὰ τοῦτο δὲ καὶ εἷς ἄνθρωπος ἐγένετο ἀπ' αὐτοῦ δὲ προῆλθε καὶ τὸ θῆλυ.* (Ibid., xvii. 12.)

verse, only in God it does not destroy the essential and eternal unity. That *Sophia*, who is also called the child of God, is to God that which Eve was to Adam. She evidently represents the inferior element, designated in ordinary Gnosticism under the name of the Demiurgus, and we thus find invincible dualism carried even into this exalted sphere of the Divine unity. By an inconsistency, which would be strange in a more logical system, this Divine wisdom, which is the inferior element in God, becomes the good element in the world. This is easy to comprehend. The Divine wisdom, in so far as it is the direct cause of the material creation, may be an inferior element compared to the one God, but is none the less superior to matter, as the pure ideal is above its actual realisation. Wisdom becomes the right hand of God, while the prince of the material world, who is its personification, is His left hand.* He is called Satan, or the Devil. Thus we find in creation the great law of dualities.† It may be traced through all orders of existences, always giving the preference to good over evil till the creation of man, who is the point of junction of the two series, and who inaugurates the reverse order, for in the human sphere evil always takes precedence of good.‡

Let us look more closely into the mode of the world's creation. The Sophia brings into operation the eternal matter, which is before virtually in existence, and is, as it were, the body of God. This matter is essentially flexible and susceptible of any

* *Ἀριστερὰ τοῦ θεοῦ δύναμις.* ("Homil.," vii. 2.)
† *Τὸν κανόνα τῆς συζυγίας.* (Ibid., ii. 18.) ‡ Ibid., ii. 16.

transformation, so that, under the action of the Divine breath of the Sophia, the air is changed into water, and the water again, becoming solidified, is changed into stone and earth; the stones striking together produce fire. "Did not God change the rod of Moses into a serpent, that is to say, into an animated being, which subsequently became a rod again? Did not that same rod turn the water of the Nile into blood, and then the blood again to water? Thus is it with man; the spirit breathed into the dust made it flesh, which returns to dust again."* The four elements, which are the dry, the moist, air and fire, are neuter or indifferent in a moral point of view, being neither good nor bad at the time of their production. They are endowed, however, with a kind of spontaneity or liberty; they combine at will,† and from this combination results the devil, called also the prince of this world. He is the soul of this great body of the universe. He represents justice, while the Sophia represents love;‡ he is the king of the present world, while the Sophia reigns over the world to come. The dualities succeed each other in the order indicated: earth, then heaven; day, then night. Adam is made

* "Homil.," xx. 6.

† Ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ μὲν προβέβληνται τὰ πρῶτιστα στοιχεῖα τέσσαρα, ὅθεν δὴ καὶ πατὴρ τυγχάνει πάσης οὐσίας, οὐ τῆς γνώμης τῆς κατὰ τὴν κρᾶσιν. (Ibid., xx. 9.) The text of Dressel had οὔτης γνώμης. Mœller's correction ("Gesch. der Kosmolog.," p. 465) seems to me excellent. God is the father of the elements, but He is not the cause of the thought which determines their combination. That is the province of liberty.

‡ Θεὸς ἀπένειμε βασιλείας δύο δυσίν τισιν, ἀγαθῷ τε καὶ πονηρῷ, δοὺς τῷ μὲν κακῷ τοῦ παρόντος κόσμου μετὰ νόμου τὴν βασιλείαν, ὥστ' ἂν ἔχειν ἐξουσίαν κολάζειν τοὺς ἀδικοῦντας· τῷ δὲ ἀγαθῷ τὸν ἐσόμενον ἀίδιον αἰῶνα. (Ibid., xv. 7.)

in the image of God.* He is His living representative, the great prophet of the truth, but he contains in himself the female element, or Eve, which is false prophecy. Human history is divided between the true prophecy and the false. Both are found in Holy Scripture, on which we are to exercise the elective faculty. The male element, the element of the good and true, appears in the true Jewish prophecy, and is concentrated in Jesus, the prophet by pre-eminence. The female and evil element, which has corrupted the sacred book itself, has its full development in Paganism.† Idolatry was brought to earth by the fallen angels changed into demons; their coming to earth was designed for a good end, namely, to chastise the ingratitude of men towards God, by impelling those who had been guilty of it to the most shameless passions, and inflicting on them the deepest dishonour. To gratify their covetousness, they had changed themselves into diamonds and all sorts of precious stones. Finally, they allowed themselves to be inflamed with the basest desires. Enamoured of female beauty, they fell into various adulteries, which gave birth to giants. These, gratifying by vast massacres their bloodthirsty souls, caused malarious vapours to arise from the sodden soil, which produced sicknesses. The demons led mankind into idolatry, and taught man the arts of magic.‡ This absurd legend was designed to pour contempt upon the pagan nations. Since the time of Christ the two conflicting dominions

* Εἰκὼν γὰρ θεοῦ ὁ ἄνθρωπος. ("Homil.," xi. 4.)
† Ὁ ἄρσην ὅλως ἀλήθεια, ἡ θήλεια ὅλη πλάνη. (Ibid., iii. 27.)
‡ Ibid., viii. 12, *et seq.*

are still in active opposition. The present age, the world with its shows and seductions, leads astray the majority of men. The true disciples of Jesus are the humble and the poor, who live for the age to come, under the guidance of eternal wisdom, and practising all the prescribed ordinances. If the "Clementines" seem at first to recognise the free-will of man,* they soon withdraw the concession, for according to the system, evil no less than good is in conformity with the will of God.† He uses His left as well as His right hand, and is as adorable when He smites and punishes as when He blesses and rewards. The devil, who thus represents justice, is His servant in a manner. He carries out His designs no less than the Sophia. The false prophecy is as necessary as the true.‡ We are surprised, after such declarations, to hear of the punishment of the wicked, but it is only a seeming punishment, for hell is the paradise of the demon, who finds there an abode in harmony with his nature. As for the good, they are to be absorbed in God, "as the vapours of the mountain are absorbed by the sun."§ Other passages suggest the idea that the entire visible universe will be lost in the Divine unity, the final centre of eternal repose, as it was the focus from which all life proceeded.

It is evident that this attempt to resolve Gnosticism into an idealised Judaism is not successful. The "Clementines" cannot get rid of the Demiurgus;

* "Εκαστος ἐξουσίαν ἔχει πείθεσθαι πρὸς τὸ πράσσειν ἀγαθὰ ἢ κακά. ("Homil.," xx. 3.)

† Τῶν δὲ δύο τούτων ὁ ἕτερος τὸν ἕτερον ἐκβιάζεται, θεοῦ κελεύσαντος. (Ibid., xx. 3.)

‡ Ibid., xx. 3. § Ibid., xx. 9.

their attempt to merge it in God is vain. It is still present as the eternal limitation of the Divine unity and goodness. By a bold stroke they proclaim that evil is only a name, and that in substance it is identical with good; but a change of appellation is not a change of essence. Evil remains no less evil to the conscience. The claim of this complex system to respect lies in its very contradictions, in that assertion of liberty, which is absurd from the logical point of view, but which is the true voice of conscience. The system resolves itself none the less into an idealistic pantheism, which only moderates the excesses of asceticism by virtue of its Jewish origin. A doctrine born in the land of the patriarchs could not defame marriage like an Indian sect. Gnostic dualism, though far from being vanquished by Ebionitism, reappears under a new disguise in the "Clementines," and both schools are soon submerged in the naturalistic current which carries them away, and which is no other than ancient paganism itself.

An accurate study of the history of Judæo-Christianity in the course of the second century, enables us to estimate justly the value of Hegesippus' testimony to the general state of the Church. That Father declared, in the year 160, "that he found it everywhere in perfect accordance with the law, the prophets, and the commandments of the Lord."* Some have concluded from these words that the Jewish tendency was predominant in all the Christianity of that time. But this is attaching to the word a meaning far too

* Ἐν ἑκάστῃ δὲ διαδοχῇ καὶ ἐν ἑκάστῃ πόλει οὕτως ἔχει ὡς ὁ νόμος κηρύττει καὶ οἱ προφῆται καὶ ὁ Κύριος. (Hegesippus apud Eusèbe, "H. E.," iv. 22.)

exact. Hegesippus appeals simply to the authority of the Scriptures taken as a whole, and as they were ordinarily placed in opposition to Gnosticism. As the Gnostics assailed mainly the Old Testament, they must be met on that ground, and it naturally played an important part in the controversy. Nothing can be argued from the portrait of James drawn by Hegesippus, which in many features recalls the ideas of the Nazarenes, for that description corresponds perfectly to the state of the Church at Jerusalem in its first period, and to the particular place filled by the brother of the Lord. This is history, not doctrine. As to the Jewish origin of Hegesippus himself, nothing is less sustained by evidence.* Unless then we put a forced construction on his language, no conclusion can be drawn from it contrary to the reality of the facts as gathered from the general history of the second century. Judæo-Christianity held on an obscure existence under the name of Nazareneism wherever it did not coalesce with Oriental and Gnostic ideas. It nevertheless exerted an indirect influence upon the Church, diffusing through the general atmosphere ideas and influences, the traces of which we shall discover again and again.

* See Ritschl, "Altcat. Kirche," 2nd edit., p. 268.

CHAPTER IV.

MONTANISM.

We place Montanism in the category of Judaising heresies, although it is not, like Ebionitism, connected in its origin with the Synagogue. It is none the less a retrogression towards Mosaism, both in its general tendency and in the forms and ceremonies adopted by it. Judaising heresy, considered in its principle, arises out of the defalcations of Christian spirituality. Nothing is more difficult to maintain than the reign of true liberty. The law of the letter, with its numberless precepts, is more limited than the law of the spirit, which embraces the entire life. Hence that constant tendency of the human heart, to exchange the yoke of an inconvenient and exacting freedom for a definite and therefore limited law of commandments. Evangelical morality, which makes love the best reward of love, places man at a height where he can with difficulty sustain himself. He prefers the glories of a theocracy to the purely ideal paradise of St. John and St. Paul, which is briefly contained in the grand words: "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."* Again, for those who shrink from evil

* 1 John iii. 2.

and its pollutions, asceticism seems singularly to facilitate the moral strife, for, by assimilating the corporeal element with sin, it gives them the hope of overcoming it. Legalism, apocalyptic visions, asceticism—these are the three main elements of that Judæo-Christianity which has reappeared so often in the Church under various names, but never with more power than in Montanism. This has exercised no unimportant influence upon official orthodoxy, and the condemnation that has been repeatedly passed upon it has not prevented it from leaving in the Church a hidden leaven easy to discover.

Montanism differed markedly from primitive Judæo-Christianity in this respect—that it recognised without reservation the superiority of the Gospel over all the religious institutions which had preceded it. It even displayed on one main point a spirit of greater liberality than the Church; it repudiated strongly the sacerdotalism which was gaining ground on all sides. We have then to deal here with a tendency, not with a school of Judaism; but that tendency, with the reservations we have noted, was clearly a step backward, a deviation from the ways of spiritual Christianity, although Montanism assumes to be the highest manifestation of the new spirit. The manner in which it favours and formulates legalism, its apocalyptic visions, its extravagant asceticism, all mark it as Jewish in spirit, if not by origin and tradition.

The very antipodes of Gnosticism, Montanism waged the sternest warfare with it, yet it did not find grace in the eyes of the Church, which cast it away from her, though it had produced the most

brilliant and eloquent of her apologists. This sentence of exclusion was pronounced before the great Councils and the union of the Church with the empire: it was the spontaneous verdict of the Christian conscience, singularly modified in the case of Tertullian, who, in spite of all his passionate extravagances remains a venerated Father of the Church. It is just to recognise that Montanism was more than a mere difference of opinion; it was not compatible with a Church which was to live and assume an organised form; it opened the door to all that was visionary, to all the vagaries of the imagination, and left no basis for a religious association. The exposition of its doctrine will show that even when it remained in harmony with the Church on the fundamental points of doctrine, it fell into such extremes of exaggeration, that it could not be contained within any existing forms. It cannot, however, be treated as heresy in the same way as Gnosticism, for it maintains the substance of the faith. "The Cataphrygians, or Montanists," says Epiphanius, "accept the whole of sacred Scripture, both the Old and New Testament, and confess also the resurrection of the dead; they hold the same views as the Holy Catholic Church with regard to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."* Tertullian fought against Gnosticism with the same weapon as the orthodox defenders of the Church; his views on the person of Jesus Christ participate in the more or less vague and fluctuating character of the theology of the time, without incurring in any respect the charge of heresy, which

* Epiphanius, "Hæres.," 48.

would doubtless have been brought against them two centuries later. This orthodoxy in the substance of its doctrine did not, however, give Montanism the right to claim its place in evangelical catholicity, for it was itself a principle of implacable and irreconcilable exclusion. We must bear in mind this complexity of the situation, in order to appreciate justly this great movement. On the one hand, it connects itself with the orthodoxy of its time; we shall not therefore hesitate to place Tertullian, as he is placed by all the historians of doctrine, among the most illustrious theologians of the Church, by virtue of that great portion of his work, which is free from any sectarian impress. It is just this agreement on fundamental points, which enabled Montanism to exert so much influence over the Church before its repudiation by it. There is an entire period of its history, during which it is only a party, or school, treated with other parties on a footing of equality. For the present we have to occupy ourselves with Montanism only in that later stage, when it had become a doctrine or sect apart, placing itself outside the bounds of the evangelical catholicity of the early ages. It flung itself, so to speak, into a cross-road which could lead nowhere, for it diverged from the normal development of religious thought and Christian society, although on more than one point it was more in the right than its adversaries, and received its first impulse from a nobler inspiration.

That inspiration was the pursuit of the most elevated and austere ideal; an ideal, however, so conceived that the Church could no longer find a footing upon

earth, but must be necessarily reduced to an association of latter-day saints. The fundamental error which marred this grand inspiration, was the failure to comprehend the operation of Christianity except under the form of a permanent miracle; it did not recognise the supernatural as taking possession of the natural order, penetrating and transforming it; it marked out the two domains as in direct and constant opposition. The Christian life was not merely referred to a miraculous beginning, the intervention in history of a reparative and saving power, inaugurating a new and final historical development. No, there must be nothing less than a perpetual miracle; everything would be lost if the concurrence of natural activity, of patient labour, were for a moment admitted, if the conditions of a slowly progressive development were in any degree recognised. The religion of the Spirit is not a new sun which has arisen on the horizon of humanity, and which is to run its regular course after the primary miracle of its appearance; it is to retain ever the brilliance of the lightning; it is to be one long flashing storm, rather than the quiet shining of the sun. The divine does not harmonise with the human element; it always descends upon it as on its prey, overcoming and subverting it. This tendency has often been manifested in the history of Christianity, under various names, but it is well deserving of study in its earliest form, which was also the most remarkable, because it shared in the grandeur of a heroic age.

In substance, Montanism was only a strong reaction against established order, which has ever a

tendency to fall into routine; it partook of the fanatic temperament of the race which fostered it, and of the passionate genius of its most illustrious representative. It might justly, however, make its boast in the most glorious past of Christianity. In fact, the Church of Jerusalem, immediately after the feast of Pentecost, does present the character of the purely supernatural triumphing over all the conditions of common life. She is awaiting the solemn midnight cry, which shall announce the return of the mystic Bridegroom: she believes herself to be on the threshold of the King's palace, in which the eternal marriage shall be consummated; with loins girt about, and lamps burning, her members seem no longer conscious of any ties of earth; all private ownership of property is well-nigh merged in the first fervour of the new charity. The Church is in a state of ecstasy, with eyes lifted to heaven, whence the fiery tongues of the Spirit came down upon her. Miracles are multiplied in her midst; the divine thoughts, like the new wine which breaks the imprisoning vessel, cannot be contained within the ordinary forms of speech. This strange and sublime condition must of necessity be transitory; even in the age of the Apostles, the stream which had burst from its source at first in such impetuous floods, hollowed out for itself a quiet channel and began to flow between determined bounds. Later in the first century, both ecstasy and miracles diminished; calm and thoughtful teaching took the place of those burning effusions of the gift of prophecy; ecclesiastical organisation began to develop itself; and the Divine Spirit transformed and utilised,

instead of suppressing human activity. In the next century, the commingling of the natural and supernatural element was still more apparent. Supernatural gifts, properly so called, do not wholly disappear; the Fathers of that age still speak of gifts of miracle and prophecy, but these are the exceptions. The divine operation, always supernatural in its origin, blends more and more with human action, leaving, however, full play to the free agency of man, and consequently often hindered, fettered, and even stifled by it. The Church, realising that it is to rear something more than the structure of a day, seeks durability and extension; like every other society destined to live, it begins to organise. The possible acquires more importance in its eyes than the ideal; it is led on to make concessions, compromises, changes in the primitive type. Nothing can be more legitimate than a reaction against these alterations, if only it be regulated by the established laws of history, and carried out by patient effort; not by recourse to prodigy and ecstasy, which are no longer the religious conditions of the time. The error of Montanism consists then, not in its protest against the enervation of holiness and Christian liberty in the Church, but in the exaggeration of the reaction, and in the refusal to recognise any other type of Christianity than that of the upper chamber of Jerusalem. It sought to perpetuate and resuscitate that which was only transitory, and mistook the chimerical and the impossible for the ideal.

The early history of Montanism is obscure.* It is

* The principal works to be consulted on Montanism are: 1st, "Philosophoumena," viii. 19. 2nd, Epiphanius, "Contra Hæres.," xlviii. 3rd, Eusebius, "H. E." v. 16-20. 4th, Tertullian's Mon-

certain that it took its rise about the middle of the second century in Phrygia, in the midst of a people naturally fanatical and credulous. Its founder, Montanus, is known to us only by vague reports, and by the calumnies of his adversaries.* He appears to have taught the fundamental doctrine of the sect on the development of revelation by the Paraclete. Two women, his compatriots, Maximilla and Priscilla, were his acolytes; they were regarded as the chosen organs of the Holy Spirit.† Eusebius mentions among his adherents in Asia Minor, Theodotus, Alcibiades, Themison, and Proculus, who took an important part in the controversies respecting the determination of Easter.‡ It is probable that the sect assumed, even at this date, an attitude of opposition to the episcopacy, if we may judge by the keenness of the polemics used against it by some of the Bishops of Asia Minor. Claudius Apollinaris, Bishop of Hierapolis,§ and Miltiades, the author of a book against ecstatic prophecy,‖ Serapion, Bishop of Antioch,¶ and subsequently Clement of Alexandria,

tanist treatises. Among modern writers, beside the historians of doctrine already quoted, we place foremost Ritschl's admirable chapter on Montanism ("Altcat. Kirche," p. 462 *et seq.*) See also Baur, "Der. Christ. der drei ersten Jahrhund.," p. 264 *et seq.*

* Eusebius mentions these calumnies, ascribing them to an ecclesiastical writer of unknown name. ("H. E.," v. 16.)

† Tertullian names Montanus ("De jejuniis," i.). He mentions with him also the two Phrygian prophetesses: "Prophetias Montani, Priscæ, Maximillæ." ("Adv. Prax.," i.) See also the "Philosophoumena:" "Ετεροι προληφθέντες ὑπὸ γυναίκων ἠπάτηνται, Πρισκίλλης τινὸς καὶ Μαξιμίλλης καλουμένων, ἐν ταύταις τὸ παράκλητον πνεῦμα κεχωρηκέναι λέγοντες. ("Phil.," viii. 19.)

‡ Eusebius, "H. E.," v. 16, 18. Tertullian speaks in high terms of praise of Proculus: "Proculus noster, virginis senectæ et christianæ eloquentiæ dignitas." ("Adv. Valent.," 5.)

§ Ibid., iv. 27. ‖ Ibid., v. 17. ¶ Ibid., v. 19.

took part in this discussion.* At Rome Montanism found well-prepared soil in a Church which had produced such a man as Hermas. The book of the "Pastor" is entirely filled with visions, inculcating ascetic rigour; it abounds in protests against the enervation of piety, and it opposes vehemently the aggressions of the clergy. It speaks also of the coming end of the world, but it does not raise the vision to the height of a dogmatic statement; it stops short at the point where the shade would tone into a decided colour. It is only a tendency, not an organised party. This tendency, however, was singularly favourable to the propagation of Montanism. It is not surprising then that Montanism should have found large development in Rome, and even secured the momentary adherence of a Bishop, who can be no other than Eleutherus (170-185).†

It was openly condemned subsequently, on the denunciation of Praxeas, who came from Asia Minor. The decided conflict only commenced after the Bishop of Rome had advanced his claim to pardon the gravest sins, such as adultery.‡ At Lyons, Montanism had

* Clement of Alexandria, "Strom.," iv. 13, 95; vi. 8, 66.

† "Idem Praxæas tunc episcopum romanum coegit litteras pacis jam emissas revocare." (Tertull. "Adv. Prax.," i.) This bishop is, in all probability, Eleutherus, for Victor, who distinguished himself by his intolerance towards the Asiatics on the subject of the celebration of Easter, would not have been likely to show even a momentary indulgence towards a sect altogether opposed to the practice he enjoined. Soter (157-161) and Anicetus (161-170) both lived at a time too early in the history of Montanism to allow the supposition that during their episcopate there could have arisen a quarrel needing to be thus appeased.

‡ The reference is, no doubt, to the facts with which Zephyrinus was reproached by Hippolytus. ("Phil.," Bk. ix.) "Audio edictum esse propositum et quidem peremptorium. Pontifex scilicet maximus, episcopus episcoporum edicit: Ego et mœchiæ et fornicationis dicta pœnitentia functis demitto." (Tertullian, "De pudic.," i.)

found access through the relations subsisting between that city and the Christians of Asia Minor, but the character of the sect was not definitely known there. Irenæus was sent to the capital of the empire as the bearer of a letter asking for explanations and information.* The attitude assumed by him towards Montanism, the keen polemics in which he engaged to oppose it, show plainly what was the nature of the reply from Rome.†

Montanism gathered the largest number of adherents in proconsular Africa. We see from the "Acts of the Martyrdom" of Felicitas and Perpetua, that it had attracted to itself some of the noblest confessors of the faith.‡ Tertullian, in embracing it, gave it all the prestige and power of his marvellous eloquence. The success of Montanism was as brief as it was brilliant. The credit enjoyed by the great apologist of Carthage with Cyprian, the apostle of rule and authority, is sufficient evidence that, after his death, the great schismatic ceased to create alarm, and that his high qualities received the estimation they deserved.

Let us now consider the Montanist doctrine in itself. It draws its primary inspiration from the lively conviction of the approaching end of all things. Montanism is not content with insisting upon the duty of the Christians to be perpetually looking for the glorious return of Christ. It fixes a date beyond which it does not admit the possibility of the continuance of human history. "After me," exclaims one of its prophetesses, "there will be no more prophets."§ Tertullian

* Eusebius, v. 3. † Ibid., v. 20. ‡ "Acta Perpetuæ et Felicit."
§ *Μετ' ἐμὲ προφῆτις οὐκέτι ἔσται, ἀλλὰ συντέλεια ἔσται.* (Epiphanius, "Hæres.," xlviii. 2.)

paints, in fiery colours, the great scenes of the last judgment, which he is awaiting from hour to hour. His excited imagination delights in representing to itself the millennium in the most gorgeous hues. "We are expecting our promised reign upon earth; before we are transported to the skies our condition will be made entirely new. After the resurrection we shall live for a thousand years in the city built by the hand of God, which is that heavenly Jerusalem called by the apostle—our mother.* There the saints will dwell, enriched with all spiritual treasures, in compensation for those which we have contemned or sacrificed in this present life."

The saints will be raised each in his own order, an order determined by merit. The conflagration of the world, and the last judgment, will be the final act of the drama. The Asiatic Montanists went so far as to point out the spot on which the heavenly Jerusalem would come down; they fixed on Pepuza in Phrygia.†

Montanism pretends to have received special revelations as to the end of the world. These revelations have been made to it alone; its founders received them directly from the Holy Spirit or the Paraclete. If it be objected that the Church at large has had no part in them, and therefore cannot recognise them, Montanism replies by claiming for itself a position above the organisation and regular powers of the Church, and asserting, as its own monopoly, the continuity of revelation. Thus the doctrine of the

* "Confitemur in terra nobis regnum repromissum, in mille annos, in civitate divini operis Hierusalem de cœlo delata." (Tertullian, "C. Marc.," iii. 24.)

† Epiphanius, "Hæres.," 48.

Paraclete is developed. Anterior revelations are not set aside; they are regarded as initiatory steps. The Old Testament retains its claims, but the New Testament suffers depreciation, inasmuch as it is no longer the final utterance of the Divine teaching. It has not brought revelation to perfection; it has made, especially in the teaching of the apostles, more than one concession to human weakness, and, like Moses, it has allowed certain practices because of the hardness of men's hearts. "The Lord," says Tertullian, "has sent the Paraclete, because human weakness was not capable of receiving the truth all at once; it was necessary that the discipline should be regulated and progressively ordered, until it was carried to perfection by the Holy Spirit."* Paul gave certain instructions rather by permission than in the name of God; he tolerated marriage because of the weakness of the flesh, in the same manner as Moses permitted divorce. "If Christ has abolished that which Moses had commanded, why should not the Paraclete forbid that which Paul allows?"†

In fine, the Holy Spirit is rather a restorer than an innovator.‡ Was not the new development of the revelations given foreseen and declared by Jesus Christ? The final and glorious economy of the Paraclete may indeed have commenced at Pentecost, but it only reached its culminating point with the appearance of Montanus and the prophetesses of Phrygia; none can tell

* Tertullian, "De virg. veland.," i.

† "Si Christus abstulit quod Moyses præcepit, cur non et Paracletus abstulerit, quod Paulus indulsit?" ("De monogam.," i. 4.)

‡ "Ut Paracletum restitutorem potius sentias disciplinæ quam institutorem." (Ibid., i. 4.)

where its developments may end. It was impossible to make a more serious assault than this upon apostolic Christianity.

When revelation is regarded, not as a doctrine or a law, but as a fact—the fact of redemption—the apostolic testimony retains its supreme, unique, incomparable value. The fact cannot be changed; it is what it is, and the original witnesses chosen by God to preserve its memory, endowed with the gifts necessary for so grand a mission, cannot be either replaced or surpassed. Revelation must then be complete when redemption is accomplished. But it is otherwise when revelation is considered essentially as a doctrine or law; then the protocol remains open as it were, and progress is always possible. This was the ground taken by Montanism, and most of its errors and exaggerations arise out of this false conception of revelation. By attributing to the Paraclete the power of indefinitely adding to revelation, by placing still continuous revelation above that which was written, Montanism gave scope for all that was visionary, for all the hallucinations of diseased minds. When the exercise of prophecy in the Church ceased to consist simply in the prediction of a particular event, or in the vindication of an old truth with new power; when in addition to this it implied the possibility of modifying or adding to that truth, it ceased to offer anything definite, any firm and immovable foundation, any rock on which to build. Religion lost the definitive character which belongs to that which is absolute. The danger was so much the greater, since the inspiration which thus had power to change everything was exempted

from the restraint of all the rules of reason, as well as from the authority of the Holy Scriptures. It was admitted to be a sort of ecstasy, and its great merit, according to the sect, consisted in its bringing man into a state of complete passivity. "Ecstasy seized the inspired man; this is the power of the Holy Spirit which produces prophecy."* It is a sort of God-sent madness, which constitutes the spiritual faculty called by us, prophecy. The soul is no longer self-possessed when it prophesies; it is in a state of delirium; a power not its own masters it.† Dreams and visions occupy the principal place in the inspiration of the Montanists. Inspiration is only the harp which vibrates as it is touched by the player's finger.‡ "Man sleeps; I alone am walking," says the Paraclete.§ In such a conception of inspiration, flexible natures, susceptible of keen and rapid impressions, were the chosen organs of revelation. Thus woman occupied the place of honour in Montanism. The prophetess Priscilla asserted that Jesus Christ had appeared to her in a feminine garb.‖ Perpetua had an ecstatic vision of the same kind. "There is among us," says Tertullian, "a sister who has the gift of revelations. On the Sabbath, in the assembly, she is seized with ecstasy, and holds converse with the angels, and often with the Lord Himself. She sometimes reads hearts and tells the needed remedies to those who ask her."¶

The Montanist Pythoness was quite as liable to be

* "Extasis, Sancti Spiritus vis operatrix prophetiæ." (Tertullian, "De anima," 11.)

† In spiritu patitur. (Ibid., 9.)

‡ Ἄνθρωπος ὡσεὶ λύρα. (Epiphanius, "Hæres.," xlviii. 4.)

§ Ibid. ‖ Ibid., xlix. 1. ¶ Tertullian, "De anima," 9.

wrought upon by extreme nervous and spiritual excitement, as the priestess of Apollo, divinely intoxicated on her Delphic tripod. Ambiguous and lying oracles could thus be substituted for the clear and exact prescriptions of the sacred books. It is obvious that the whole of Christianity was imperilled by this doctrine of the Paraclete. This was the fundamental heresy of Montanism, and infinitely more serious than the particular errors into which it might be led.

Those errors, as we have already observed, do not relate so much to doctrine as discipline, although the sect may be fairly charged with changing the Gospel, or at least falsifying its spirit, by its purely legal conception of the new religion. The view which the Montanists took of divine inspiration led them not to recognise the demands of the ecclesiastical order. They were undoubtedly right in their resistance to the encroachments of the hierarchy, and to the relaxation of discipline. But they went too far on this point, as on every other—insisting upon a Church of saints and perfect men, as if the secrets of the heart could ever be judged of in a human society, which is constrained to conduct itself with that which is external. "The Church," said Tertullian, "is not constituted by the number of bishops; it is the Holy Spirit in the spiritual man."*

This declaration would be correct if it applied to the invisible Church, which is composed of all true Christians, and of all that is truly Christian in them. But it becomes false and dangerous when applied to

* "Ecclesia Spiritus per spiritalem hominem, non Ecclesia numerus episcoporum." (Tertullian, "De pudicit.," 21.)

any one visible Church, which cannot be the adequate expression of the invisible, in which the tares grow with the good wheat, and their separation is impossible. The evil is not excluded by making a profession of the faith the personal condition of membership; there is no guarantee that this profession will be in all cases sincere, and even were it so, there is no religious community in which it is not incomplete. It follows that no one such community can claim to be itself, to the exclusion of all others, the Temple of the Holy Ghost; else it becomes at once an exclusive sect, like the Montanists, who called themselves the perfect, the spiritual men, speaking scornfully of all other Christians as carnal. Their conception of inspiration, as never final and complete, moreover, rendered any fixed order impossible, and destroyed ecclesiastical authority. All the elements of the faith were daily liable to change. It was impossible to divine what strange answers to spiritual questions might fall from heaven.

The Montanist revelations related especially to questions of discipline and morals. This imparted to the system the legal character of which we have already spoken. The distinction between the two covenants was lost sight of. "The Church," says Tertullian, "blends the law and the prophets with the Gospels and the writings of the apostles."* The Gospel was a code, no less than Mosaism, especially with the amplifications given to it by the Paraclete. The law of liberty is replaced by precepts of the

* "Ecclesia legem et prophetas cum evangelicis et apostolicis scriptis miscet." (Tertullian, "De prescript.," 36.)

minutest detail. All that was not permissible was laid under a stern interdict;* and thus vanished that noble Christian liberty, which enlarges the domain of the moral principle instead of narrowing it, and takes possession of the entire life, to bring it all under one direction, and to animate it with the inspiration of love as with the breath of life. Montanism tended to a system of growing severity, and it laid special stress upon three points. First, it exalted martyrdom with solemn fervour. Martyrdom satisfied its favourite aspirations by breaking all the bonds of earth, trampling under foot the present life, and lifting the eager soul at once into the heavenly sphere, and to a share in the kingdom of Jesus Christ. The Church assuredly gave to martyrdom no niggard honour, but Montanism went further, and severely condemned every measure of prudence in times of proscription. The Treatise of Tertullian on "Flight and Persecution," expresses perfectly the ideas of the sect. "The Spirit," he says, "urges us all to martyrdom, not to flight."† The Montanists gloried in the great number of confessors who had come forth from their ranks.‡

The same severity characterises their practice of fasting. Christians are enjoined to fast until the evening on the "dies stationum," Wednesday and Friday. During two weeks of each year they are to abstain from meat, wine, fruits, and also from the baths so highly esteemed by the ancients. This time of self-mortification is called *Xerophagiai*. Tertullian has

* "Imo prohibetur quod non ultro est permissum." (Tertullian, "De corona milit.," 2.)

† "Spiritus omnes pæne ad martyrium exhortatur, non ad fugam." Tertullian, "De fug. in persecut.," 9.) ‡ Eusebius, "H. E.," v. 16.

written an entire treatise in defence of fasting. The objections brought against the sect on this point show clearly the exaggerated legalism by which it was estranged from the true Christian tradition. The law and the prophets, it was said to the Montanists, were until John; fasting thenceforward should be a voluntary, not an enjoined act. The apostles themselves observed it, without laying it as a yoke upon any: we must not return to legal prescriptions. The prophets showed great contempt for all that is merely outward observance.* Tertullian replies that nothing is more adapted to give large licence to the flesh, than the reducing of the law to the great commandment of love. He maintains the necessity of fasting—first, on the ground that self-indulgence led to the fall. "It is necessary," he says, "that man should give satisfaction to God with the same element by which he offended, and that he should deny himself food, which caused his fall."† That fasting is agreeable to God is proved by the words full of tenderness addressed to Elijah, when he was fasting in the desert of Horeb, especially as compared with the severe tone of the call to Adam, when he had been eating the forbidden fruit. Fasting facilitates holy visions, as is proved by sacred history from Daniel to Peter, and it prepares for martyrdom; while the neglect of such abstinence leads to apostacy, by fostering the love for material pleasures. To the objections drawn from Holy Scripture, Tertullian replies by the revelations of the Paraclete,

* Tertullian, "De jejuniis," 2.

† "Ut homo per eamdem materiam causæ satis Deo faciat, per quam offenderat." (Ibid., 3.)

which legitimately give expansion to its application. In this treatise he recognises no distinction between the Old and New Testament, as is indeed natural from his strictly legal standpoint.* Let the athletes who fight with the wild beasts, feed and grow fat, if they will; but such is not the calling of the Christian, who is to wrestle, not against flesh and blood, but against the powers of the air. The gate of Heaven is narrow; an attenuated body will enter more easily than one puffed up with fleshly indulgence.†

Montanism, like all ascetic doctrines, enters its strongest protest against the union of the sexes. It seems to object only to second marriages, which it imperatively forbids, but in fact it deprecates and denounces marriage altogether, and urges absolute continence. Tertullian, in his treatise on "Monogamy," contents himself with prohibiting second marriages, taking his stand on Scripture, when he can make it sustain his view, appealing to the higher power of the Paraclete when he has to deal with the exact texts of St. Paul. The Apostle, according to him, gave sanction to second marriages, but with a marked tone of antipathy. The Paraclete, however, in his new revelation, always acts in conformity with Jesus Christ and His promises. "We acknowledge," said Tertullian, "only one marriage, as we acknowledge only one God.‡ Jesus Christ has had only one bride, which is the Church. By His example, and by the

* Tertullian, "De jejuniis," c. 6, 7, 8.

† "Facilius, si forte per angustam salutis januam introibit caro exilior." (Ibid., 17.)

‡ "Unum matrimonium novimus, sicut unum Deum." ("De monogam.," 1.)

explicit command revealed by the Paraclete, he has restored the true nature; for monogamy dates from Eden."* The priests were to have only one wife. Now, under the new economy, every Christian is a priest of Christ. No difference should be made, in a moral point of view, between the clergy and the laity, for the former are taken from among Christian people.† Beside, how can marriage, which makes of the man and woman one flesh, be renewed. Is such an assimilation capable of repetition? Beside, the bonds between husband and wife continue in death;‡ they have only become more sacred by becoming more spiritual. Tertullian goes even further in his treatise, his "Exhortation to Chastity." He avows the principles of false asceticism. He recognises a morality of perfection which rises above the ordinary standard. Permanent virginity is its highest point; abstinence from the sexual relations in marriage is akin to it in virtue.§ Let monogamy, at least, be the Christian rule, and a chaste widowhood be faithfully maintained. The various degrees of virtue correspond to the different attitudes of the mind of God Himself, the one of tolerance, the other of preference.‖ Thus we are brought to the very doctrine of the Romish counsels of the Gospel perfection—the natural issue of every legal tendency which abandons the unity of the moral principle. Tertullian does not hesitate to com-

* "In Christo omnia revocantur ad initium." ("De monogam.," 5.) † Ibid., 12.

‡ "Ergo hoc magis ei juncta est, cum quo habet apud Deum causam." (Ibid., 10.) § Tertullian, "De exhortat. castitatis," 1.

‖ "Etsi quædam videntur voluntatem Dei sapere, dum a Deo permittantur, non statim omne quod permittitur, ex mera et tota voluntate procedit ejus qui permittit." (Ibid., 3.)

pare the conjugal union to adultery, forgetting his own beautiful words about the perpetuity of marriage after death. The union of the sexes has always for its cause an impulse of lust. "Thus, then," he suggests as an objection urged, "you set a brand even on first marriages." "And rightly," he replies, "since they consist in the same act as adultery." Thus it is good for a man not to touch a woman; virginity is the highest holiness, since it is furthest removed from adultery."* Thus we see Montanism reaching, by a different path, the very same extravagant asceticism advocated by the Gnostics, and falling into the same dualism, at least in a moral point of view.

Legalism of necessity develops into casualty, for as no place is to be left to liberty, prescriptions must be multiplied. The treatises of Tertullian on "The Philosopher's Mantle," on "The Veil of the Virgin," and on the "Crown of the Soldier," give sufficient evidence of this tendency. He urges that the virgin be veiled like the married woman, so as not to kindle the flame of passion. "I entreat thee, O woman, be thou mother, daughter, or virgin, veil thy head: as mother, veil it for the sake of thy son; as sister, for thy brother; as daughter, for thy father. For thou dost imperil men of every age. Put on the armour of modesty; encircle thee with a rampart of chastity. Set a guard over thine own eyes and over those of others. Art thou not married to Christ?"† If the Christian wears the mantle at all, it is to be the

* "Ideo virginis principalis sanctitas, quia caret stupri affini tate." ("De exhortat. castitatis," 9.)

† "Nupsisti enim Christo." ("De virg. veland.," 16.)

severe garb of the censor who denounces the luxury of the world. "Glory in thy mantle, for since thou hast become a Christian, thou hast been initiated into the best of all philosophies."* The soldier may not accept the military crown, under pain of tampering with idolatry; the military service is altogether condemned by Tertullian, as incompatible with the Christian calling.

The perversion of the doctrine of redemption, which is the source of all this legalism, casuistry, and extreme asceticism, is especially notable in the arbitrary distinction made by Montanism between various kinds of sins. In the same manner as it recognises two orders of perfection, and thus does violence to the true idea of good, so does it tamper with the idea of evil. The adherents of the sect made a difference between sins venial and mortal, and denied that the Church had power to pardon the latter. They placed adultery and apostacy at the head of this black catalogue. They did not deny that God could pardon them directly, or through the medium of an exceptional revelation; but on this side the grave no restoration was possible for those who had been guilty of such sins, even though they gave the strongest pledges of their repentance. This stern sentence is carried by Tertullian to its furthest issues. His treatise on "Modesty," called forth by the decree of the Bishop of Rome, who had assumed the right to pardon the gravest sins, expresses the Montanist theory with perfect clearness. He does not dwell for an instant

* "Gaude pallium et exsulta, melior jam te philosophia dignata est, ex quo Christianum vestire cœpisti." ("De pallio," 6.)

on the very real difficulty of obtaining sufficient proof of true repentance after such grievous falls; he speaks only of the comparative gravity of different sins. "Some," he says, "are pardonable; others, on the contrary, are beyond remission; some merit punishment, others deserve damnation. From this difference in the offences comes the difference in the penitence, which varies according as it is exercised on account of a pardonable or unpardonable sin."* Nothing can be more arbitrary than such a distinction; sin is no doubt more or less heinous in proportion to its wilfulness and determinateness. But every violation of the law of God, small or great, demands alike the full mercy of God. The Church is the depository of the mercy of grace and pardon. What right has it to exclude from its bosom one class of sinners more than another, when once it has received all the assurance possible of an earnest repentance? It is not reasonable to grant an equal pardon for all sins in the Divine order, and to decree irrevocable exclusions from mercy in the order of the Church. Such exclusions can only be intended to compel the sinner to make expiation upon earth for the gravest offences. It follows then that the work of redemption is insufficient, and that, in addition to repentance, a certain satisfaction is demanded of the sinner. We here reach the root of the error of Montanism, from which grows its legalism and its asceticism. We shall see how the Church, which repudiated the sect as heretical, has itself fallen

* "Causas pœnitentiæ delicta condicimus; hæc dividimus in duos exitus, alia erunt remissibilia, alia irremissibilia." ("De pudic.," 2.)

under the influence of this capital mistake, and has ultimately adopted, with slight modifications, several of its favourite doctrines. It is to Montanism that it owes the idea of the infallibility of its Councils, which attempt in the same way to add to revelation. From the same source, too, it has derived its "counsels of perfection," and the distinction between venial and mortal sins. Let us, nevertheless, acknowledge that Montanism left also as a heritage to the Church, its noble ecclesiastical liberalism, and its strong vindication of the priesthood of all Christians.

CHAPTER V.

THE FIRST UNITARIANS.

MONTANISM was no pioneer in theology; its doctrine of the Trinity has no more precision than had the orthodoxy of the age on this most dark and difficult point. Its general tendency, however, is to strengthen the Trinitarian position. The importance which it attaches to the mission of the Paraclete, or of the Holy Spirit, in the Christian economy, evidently implies the distinction of the Divine persons. It is easy therefore to understand how the adversaries of Montanism were led, in their reactionary movement against it, to multiply their attacks on Trinitarian ideas, and to constitute themselves the fervent apostles of the unity of God. In fact, let it once be established that there is no distinction of persons in the Godhead, and it could no longer be possible to attribute to the Paraclete the powers with which He was accredited by Montanism. Under the influence of this new school extraordinary inspirations and new revelations ceased. A state of quiescence succeeded to the tumultuous excitement which, throughout, the prophets and prophetesses fostered as the normal condition of the Church's life. This gain, however, was dearly bought at the cost of the fundamental principle of Christian

theology—that living conception of the Deity, which neither removes Him to the height of a frozen abstraction, nor lowers, by confounding Him with His own creation; and which enables us to recognise the eternal realisation of love before the world was in the holy union of the Father and the Son. Doubtless clouds and darkness gather around this lofty conception, as around all that is truly sublime and exalted; but when the mind descends to lower ground, it finds only the cold divinity of deism, which is nothing more than an idea, or the diffused divinity of pantheism, which is only another name for the world. For the most part, the former of these two erroneous conceptions merges into the latter, finding it impossible to sustain itself in the void created by pure deism.

Such is in fact the process of transmutation which we have traced in Ebionitism, which, starting from abstract Monotheism, loses itself at last in the gnostic pantheism of the "Clementines." There must indeed be a logical necessity simply irresistible in this transformation of doctrine, since we find Unitarianism passing through the same phases, under the most various conditions, whether originating in the Church itself, or produced by the narrow teachings of the synagogue. It is an interesting study to observe how directly this tendency ran counter to the Christian conscience, since in an age when ecclesiastical authority was far more lax in its constitution than after Nicæa, and when the theological creed was in many points still unformed, Christianity did not hesitate to give emphatic repudiation to systems which assailed the Divinity of Christ.

§ 1. *The First School of Unitarians.**

At the starting-point of the Unitarian movement we find a sect called the *Alogians*, whose opinions cannot be ascertained with exactness on any point except that which gives it its name. The *Alogians*, or *deniers of the Word*, rejected the central doctrines of the writings of St. John,† and repudiated his Gospel on purely theoretic grounds, in the name of a strictly internal and arbitrary criticism, which altogether ignored history. Sworn enemies to Montanism, as Irenæus tells us, they thought they discovered in the book of the Revelation, and in the fourth Gospel, a confirmation of the tendency to which they were so determinately opposed. "Not willing," says Irenæus, "to recognise the gift of the Holy Spirit, shed forth upon mankind according to the good pleasure of the Father, they repudiate the Gospel of John, in which the Lord promises the Paraclete, and they deny in the same manner the spirit of prophecy."‡ The Alogians endeavoured to place the fourth Gospel in contradiction with the synoptics. The prologue of John seemed to them incompatible with the commencement of the other three Gospels. They noted the differences in

* The reader may consult with profit on this subject the portion of Dorner's book which refers to it: "Lehre von der Person Christi," pp. 497-562, 698; Baur, "Christlische Lehre der Dreieinigkeit," p. 253 and foll.; "Das Christenth. der drei erst. Jahrhund.," p. 308 and foll. I need not enumerate the general works on the history of doctrine, nor the authorities to which I refer *in loco*. See also "l'Histoire du dogme de la divinité de Jésus-Christ," by Albert Réville. Paris, 1869.

† *Ἐπεὶ οὖν τὸν λόγον οὐ δέχονται τὸν παρὰ Ἰωάννου κεκηρυγμένον* Ἄλογοι *κληθήσονται.* (Epiph., "Hæres.," li.) ‡ Irenæus, "Hæres.," iii.

chronology, specially in the time assigned to the ministry of Jesus Christ, which, according to their view of the first three Gospels, could have included only one Passover feast. For the rest, they lent their own confirmation to the antiquity of the document which they sought to repudiate, for they fixed upon Cerinthus as its author. They got rid of the book of the Apocalypse in a more summary manner, by asking what end was answered by this revelation of super-terrestrial things.* The Alogians were narrow sectaries, who were governed by the spirit of system, and forced facts into compliance with their preconceived ideas. They pursued the dangerous method in theological controversies, which consists in taking on every point a position counter to that of their opponents; not perceiving that in this way they really placed themselves in subjection to them, and surrendered their own freedom of conviction by abandoning an unbiassed investigation of the question at issue. They do not appear to have constructed a system, properly so-called. Their attachment to the synoptics doubtless prevented them from rejecting the miraculous conception of Jesus. They admitted His close union with the Deity, while they emphatically denied the distinction of the Divine persons.

The Unitarian doctrine took a more definite form with the two Theodotuses. The first was a currier from Bysance, who came to Rome about the close of the second century; the second was a money-changer in the same city. Among their disciples may be named Asclepiades, Hermophiles, and Apollonides.†

* Epiphanius, "Hæres.," li. † Eusebius, "H. E." v. 28.

Men of hard and logical mind, geometricians and grammarians by taste, they carried into the greatest problems of Christian metaphysics the methods of their rigorous dialectics, and, under pretext of unity, sacrificed the complex elements of the problems they treated.* While admitting the supernatural birth of Jesus,† they rejected the incarnation properly so-called. They gave their own interpretation to the declaration of the angel to Mary: "The power of the highest shall overshadow thee." It implied, in their view, simply a moral union between the divinity and humanity in the person of Jesus, else it would have been said to Mary that the Holy Spirit should be born of her. They supported their opinion further by the Old Testament prophecies, which declared that Messiah should be born of a woman, and laid great stress on the declarations of the Gospel concerning the human nature of Christ.‡ They acknowledged no difference between Him and other men, except that of moral superiority.§ Starting from such a basis, redemption could find no place in their system. Jesus had come simply to give in His own person and in His life an exceptional manifestation of the Divine principle, wakening into consciousness the higher element lying dormant within us. The first Theodotus was

* Καταλιπόντες τὰς ἁγίας τοῦ θεοῦ γραφὰς, γεωμετρίαν ἐπιτηδεύουσιν. (Eusebius, "H. E.," v. 28.)

† Epiphanius wrongly asserts that they deny the miraculous conception of Jesus. ("Hæres.," liv.)

‡ Epiphanius, "Hæres.," liv.

§ "Theodotus hæreticus Bysantius doctrinam introduxit, qua Christum hominem tantummodo diceret, deum autem illum negaret, ex spiritu quidem sancto natum ex virgine, sed hominem solitarium atque nudum, nulla alia præ cæteris nisi sola justitiæ auctoritate." (Tertullian, "De prescript.," c. 53.)

condemned by Bishop Victor, although he had succeeded in winning to his doctrine a holy confessor named Natalis—a man more devout than enlightened. This convert did not persist in his error, and withdrew his support from the sect after a vision, which left an ineffaceable impression of terror on his feeble mind. Theodoret accuses him of having sold himself to the heretics for money.* But this sort of imputation on the false teachers must be received with much caution, as coming from adversaries eager to believe anything that could blacken the character of those they hated.

The Fathers mention a Unitarian sect, which supposed the existence of a mysterious link between Jesus and the head of the angelic hosts, who is designated by the name Melchisedec. The second Theodotus appears to have embraced this opinion, which is evidently of Gnostic origin, and betrays the influence of mystic Ebionitism upon the Unitarianism of the west.† Artemon adhered to the purely rationalistic character of the sect. Without repudiating the supernatural birth of Jesus, he categorically denies His divinity, recognising only His spiritual oneness with the Father. He took skilful advantage of the absence of any exact Trinitarian formula during the whole of the second century in the west, to maintain that the doctrine of the divinity of Christ had never been held at Rome previous to the bishopric of Zephyrinus, who was the first to give the dignity of a dogma to

* Theodoret, "Hæretic. fabul.," ii. 5.

† Τοὺς δὲ Μελχισεδεκιανοὺς τμῆμα μὲν εἶναι τούτων φασι. (Theodoret, "De hæretic. fabul." ii. 6.) Θεόδοτος, τραπεζιτης τὴν τέχνην, λέγει δύναμιν τινὰ τὸν Μελχισεδὲκ εἶναι μεγιστην. ("Phil.," vii. 36.)

that which was only a recent invention.* This was to misconceive the deep and universal character of Christian thought from the beginning, and like a jurist, to balance the imperfectness of the formula against the substantial reality of the faith. Probably Artemon also found support for his assertion in the vacillations of the bishop Zephyrinus, a man of weak mind, carried about with every wind of doctrine, under the influence of the cunning Callisthus, who was first his *maire du palais* and then his successor. It is certain that Callisthus also had encouraged the Theodotian sect, making advances to it, as he did in turn to all the other religious factions.† But the inconsistency and rogueries of an individual cannot prevail to shake the living tradition of the Church's faith.

The most brilliant representative of the School of Artemon was Paul of Samosata, who filled the episcopal chair at Antioch from the year 260 to 270.‡ Thanks to the favour of Queen Zenobia, who showed herself very favourably inclined towards Judaism and all that was akin to it, he enjoyed extraordinary credit, and was the first type of those courtly bishops whom the union of the Church with the Empire multiplied rapidly during the following century. The Church of Antioch was an influential one; the Christians could lend large

* Theodoret, "Hæretic. fabul.," ii., 11. Eusebius, 'H. E.," v. 28. † "Phil.," ix. 12.

‡ Beside the ordinary writers on heresies, the principal authorities for Paul of Samosata are: 1st. The fragments of his writings, collected by John of Byzance ("Contra Nestor. et Eutych.," lib. iii.), reproduced from a MS. at Oxford by Ehrlich. "Dissertatio de erroribus Paul Samos." Leipzig, 1745. (To be seen in the Imperial Library of Paris.) 2nd. Collection of the Councils of Mansi (i. 1033, v. 393). "Epist. episc. ad Paul." 3rd. Mai, "Nova collectio," vii. 1.

support to the party they chose to sustain. Hence their leader was an important personage, especially in the formidable contests which frequently imperilled the power of the queen. Paul of Samosata made large use of his influence in a luxurious and worldly city. He even obtained a public office, that of *ducenarius*, or receiver of the public moneys, a post which brought him some revenue. Surrounding himself with all the splendour of oriental affluence, he endeavoured to bring all the neighbouring churches under his control. He acted the metropolitan ;* his episcopal chair resembled a throne.† He even claimed the right of exercising a civil jurisdiction, citing to his tribunal all legal cases among Christians. Large sums of money accrued to him through this imprudent interference in questions of litigation.‡ He went about escorted by a magnificent *cortége*. It was a spectacle equally novel and lamentable, to see the representative of a persecuted and still proscribed Church rivalling in pomp and arrogance the magistrates of the highest rank. Was it possible that a life which had so cast off all austerity could remain pure? The doubt was in all minds. The charge of immorality, without being distinctly stated, hung over the brilliant bishop.§ He was too often seen surrounded by elegant women, for his morals to be above suspicion. The rumour soon spread that his doctrine was as unsound as his practice. He had ventured to expurgate from the service the hymns of adoration sung to the praise of Jesus Christ, while he

* Ὑψηλὰ φρονεῖ. (Eusebius, "H. E.," vii. 30.)
† Βῆμα μὲν καὶ θρόνον ὑψηλὸν ἑαυτῷ κατασκευασάμενος (Ibid., vii. 30.)
‡ Ibid., vii. 30. § Ibid., vii. 30.

tolerated anthems in his own honour.* Such an innovation seemed sufficiently indicative of his tendencies. Firmilianus, the most influential bishop of Cappadocia, had come twice to Antioch to certify himself of the opinions held by Paul of Samosata. The latter had justified himself in ambiguous language, and been lavish of fair promises; but he showed no inclination to keep them, and again asserted, with even more openness than before, his peculiar doctrines. The perturbation was great in all the Churches. Many efforts at conciliation were made in vain. Paul of Samosata resisted all the advice and all the arguments brought to bear upon him.

Three councils were held at Antioch: the last, which was decisive, assembled in the year 269.† Paul of Samosata could not meet the cogent reasonings of Malchion, who was only a presbyter;‡ he was constrained to lift the mask, and declare himself fully as a Unitarian. His condemnation was pronounced; another bishop was put in his place, but he only yielded in the last extremity, after the defeat of Zenobia. The bishops, in order to give to their decision the force of law, called in the support of the Emperor Aurelian, who declared them to be in the right.§ We shall have occasion subsequently to investigate all the incidents of this matter, which had an important bearing on the organisation of the Church. For the present, we confine ourselves strictly to the exposition of the

* Ψαλμοὺς τοὺς μὲν εἰς τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν παύσας. (Eusebius, "H. E.," vii. 30.)

† Ibid., vii. 30.

‡ Ibid., vii. 29.

§ Ἐπεὶ ἀντέτεινε καὶ τὴν τῆς ἐκκλησίας κατεῖχεν ἡγεμονίαν, Αὐρηλιανὸν ἔπεισαν ἐξελᾶσαι τῆς ἐκκλησίας. (Theodoret, "Hæretic. fabul.," ii. 8.)

doctrine of Paul of Samosata, as it is made known to us by the fragments of his writings which have been preserved by his contemporaries.

The Bishop of Antioch carried out the principles of Theodotus and Artemon to their extreme consequences. He lowered the dignity of Christ so far as to liken Him to a mere man.* Denying His pre-existence, he admitted no distinction of persons in the Godhead.† The Word was, for him, simply the consciousness which God has of Himself; it is to the Father what the mind of man is to man himself, not a separate person, but the simple consciousness of his own personality.‡ In this sense man is the image of God, but he can never attain to a unity of essence with the Divine Being, not even by Jesus Christ. Paul of Samosata did not, however, as has been asserted, make the divinity of Jesus Christ to consist in a mere psychological resemblance with God. He recognised a positive action of the Word upon the man Jesus; the Spirit of God had descended upon Him,§ but this action was merely an influence, and did not imply unity of essence.‖ Jesus Christ was indeed born of a Virgin, but He was none the less in His nature a man like other men, with this difference, that He realised holiness,¶ and thus merited the grace of God in

* Ταπεινὰ περὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ φρονήσαντος, ὡς κοινοῦ τὴν φύσιν ἀνθρώπου γενομένου. (Eusebius, "H. E.," vii. 27.)

† Ὁ Σαμοσατεὺς ἐφρύνει μὲν μὴ εἶναι πρὸ Μαρίας τὸν υἱόν. (Athanasius, "De syn. Arim. et Seleuc.," ii. 920. Paris Edition.)

‡ Ἐν θεῷ δὲ ἀεὶ ὄντα τὸν αὐτοῦ λόγον καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ, ὥσπερ ἐν ἀνθρώπου καρδίᾳ ὁ ἴδιος λόγος. (Epiphanius, "Hæres.," 65.)

§ See Baur, "Dreieinig.," i. 304.

‖ Ἐλθόντα δὲ τὸν λόγον καὶ γοῦν οἰκήσαντα ἐν Ἰησοῦ ἀνθρώπῳ ὄντι. (Epiphanius, "Hæres.," 65.)

¶ Ἀφ' οὗ προῆλθεν ἀπο τῆς ἀπειραγάμου παρθένου, ἀπὸ τότε μὸς ἐχρηματισεν. (Athanasius, "Contra omnes hæres.," i. 1081.)

extraordinary measure.* The Divine Word animated Him by inspiration, but was not incarnate in Him. "Wisdom," said Paul of Samosata, "did not enter into substantial union with human nature."† Thus the difference between Jesus Christ and other men is relative only. Wisdom simply dwelt in Him in an exceptional manner, and it was by the measure of this Divine communication alone, that He was raised above ourselves.‡ How indeed can it be maintained that Jesus is the Son of God? Is not that name already given to the Eternal Wisdom? It would follow then that there must be two Sons of God § in the absolute sense, which is impossible. Jesus was not, therefore, the Son of God when He was born of the Virgin, but acquired that high dignity by virtue of His holiness. The Word was greater than Jesus, but Jesus was exalted by wisdom.‖ "There is," says Paul of Samosata, "no other mode of union between various natures and various persons, except that which proceeds from the will."¶ Remaining pure from sin, Christ enjoyed union with God. He became our holy and righteous Saviour, having triumphed in His conflict and agony over the sin of our forefather.** This oneness of the

* *Θείας χάριτος διαφερόντως ἠξιωμένον.* (Theodoret, "Hæretic. fabul.," ii. 8.)

† *Οὐ γὰρ συγγεγενῆσθαι τῷ ἀνθρωπίνῳ τὴν σοφίαν οὐσιωδῶς ἀλλὰ κατὰ ποιότητα.* (Ehrlich, p. 23.)

‡ *Τὸ ἐνοικῆσαι ἐν αὐτῷ τὴν σοφίαν λέγειν ὡς ἐν οὐδενὶ ἄλλῳ, τὸν μὲν τρόπον τῆς ἐνοικήσεως ὁηλοῖ μέτρῳ δὲ καὶ πλήθει ὑπερφέρειν.* (Ibid., 23.)

§ Ibid., 23.

‖ *Ὁ λόγος μείζων ἦν τοῦ Χριστοῦ, Χριστὸς δία σοφίας μέγας ἐγένετο.* (Text of Paul of Samosata. Maï, "Nova coll.," vii. 299.)

¶ *Αἱ διάφοραι φύσεις καὶ τὰ διάφορα πρόσωπα ἕνα καὶ μόνον ἐνώσεως ἔχουσι τρόπον τὴν κατὰ τὴν θέλησιν σύμβασιν.* (Ibid., vii. 68.)

** *Μείνας καθαρὸς ἁμαρτίας ἡνώθη αὐτῷ, ἅγιος καὶ δίκαιος γέγονεν ἡμῶν ὁ σωτήρ.* ("Ex Pauli sermonib. ad Sabinum." Ibid., vii. 1.)

will in love is far higher than mere unity of nature. It is thus Jesus was raised into intimate union with God, and that the Divine Spirit rested upon Him in far larger measure than upon the prophets, dwelling in Him as in a temple.* Paul of Samosata substituted an apotheosis for the incarnation, suggesting that Jesus from man became God, always however in a relative sense.† Redemption no less than incarnation is sacrificed by such a doctrine. In short, Jesus is the ideal man, who flashes before our eyes the purest rays of Divine wisdom. The distance between such a system and the Christianity of the apostles was indeed so great, that the Church rejected it without hesitation, as soon as it was able to form a true estimate of it. It was not needful to have recourse to a pagan emperor for the verdict; the sentence pronounced by the Christian conscience was itself decisive. It is curious to observe that the Fathers of the Council of Antioch rejected the expression *consubstantiality*, which was to find so much favour at Nicæa.‡ They feared that it might be taken in an equivocal sense, which would sacrifice the distinction of the Divine persons.

Beryllus, Bishop of Botsra, belonged to this class of Unitarians, until he was brought back by Origen to the general faith of the Church, as the result of a free discussion of opinions.§ We are made acquainted with his system only by a short passage in Eusebius, of which the most various interpretations are given. It runs thus: "Beryllus maintained that our Lord and

* Ὡς ἐν ναῷ θεοῦ. (Maï, "Nova collect.," vii. 299.)
† Ἐξ ἀνθρώπων γέγονε θεός. (Athanasius, i. 920.)
‡ Ibid., i. 920. § Eusebius, "H. E.," vi. 33.

Saviour did not exist *in the proper determination of His being* before His manifestation among men; that He did not possess Divinity, but that the Divine paternity only took up its abode in Him."* Some have attempted to derive from this text the idea of a Divine hypostasis taking place at the birth of Christ. The very being of God is supposed then to have undergone a change, or rather He of His own will then modified His mode of existence. The determination of His being must be referred to the absolute and transcendent One, that is to God. We can discern no such indication in this famous passage. To us it seems to assert simply the personality of Jesus. Before His birth He did not exist as the personal Word. He had no distinct pre-natal existence more than other men. The principle of His higher life was in God, as is the principle of all moral existence, or as the light which is concentrated in the central luminary. He only entered on a personal and determinate existence at His birth; the Divine element which He

* Βήρυλλος τὸν σωτῆρα λέγειν τολμῶν μὴ πρὶ οὔφιστάναι κατ' ἰδίαν οὐσίας περιγραφὴν πρὸ τῆς εἰς ἀνθρώπους ἐπιδημίας μηδὲ μὴν θεότητα ἰδίαν ἔχειν ἀλλ' ἐμπολιτευομένην αὐτῷ μόνην τὴν πατρικήν. (Eusebius, "H. E.," vi. 33.) We shall not enter into the controversy raised by the interpretation of this passage. Schleiermacher erroneously discovers in it a determination of the being of God dating from the incarnation. We adhere fully to the opinion of Baur, who discovers in it simply the negation of the individual pre-existence of Jesus Christ. He quotes on this subject a very positive passage of Origen, who reproaches a class of Unitarians, in whom it is easy to recognise the school of Beryllus, with denying the divinity of the Son, while asserting for Him a determinate existence entirely distinct from the Father—that is to say, absolutely human: Τιθέντας δὲ αὐτοῦ τὴν ἰδιότητα, καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν κατὰ περιγραφὴν τυγχάνουσαν ἑτέραν τοῦ πατρός. (Origen, "In Johann.," vol. ii. chap. 2.) There is no question, then, of a new determination of the very being of God, since the result of such teaching is the negation of the divinity of Christ. Dorner does not seem to have given sufficient weight to this passage of Origen. (Work quoted, p. 553, and following.)

possesses comes to Him from the Father, or the one God. He did not receive it by the medium of emanation, as if He were Himself a feebler ray of the Eternal Light: it became His as the result of a purely moral union. The Divinity took up its abode in the heart of Jesus, as in a holy dwelling-place, truly worthy of it, and where it was made a welcome guest. Beryllus, while a heretic, far from being at issue with the first principle of the Unitarians, represents it with greater clearness than any other teacher.

§ II. *The Second School of Unitarians.*

The apotheosis of the man Jesus was the final utterance of the first school of Unitarians. This is also the motto of Western Paganism, which is epitomised in humanism. We have seen how vain and illusory is this hypothesis: man remains what he is, and true union with God is not realised. Do we find this want more fully met in the second school, that which proceeds rather from the East than the West, and which absorbs the human in the Divine element? We know already what is the scope of the pantheistic religions of Asia Minor and India. they recognise only an impersonal infinity, in which all reality is absorbed and lost. The God of the East is the great devourer. When He reveals Himself it is not like Jehovah speaking to Moses from the midst of a bush. which burns without being consumed. He is Himself a terrible fire, which consumes the prophet and the bush; He reduces to annihilation both the world through which He manifests Himself and the man who seeks to hear His voice.

Nay, more, He Himself disappears in the void of a pantheism which denies to Him any self-consciousness. Thus does all idolatry in the end break its own idol. Neither God nor man is safe in religions or in systems which sacrifice the human or the Divine element by absorbing the one in the other. The second form of primitive Unitarianism, embodied in the school of Praxeas, Noëtus, and Sabellius, is a reaction of the old oriental genius; it is Gnosticism, without its elaborate and fantastic symbolism, adhering more closely to historic realities and to the letter of the sacred texts.

Praxeas was the first representative of this school at Rome. He came from Asia, and bore in his body the glorious stigmata of the Confessors. Thus he gained at first much credit with the Bishop Victor, and obtained from him the condemnation of Montanism. At the same time he began to propagate his peculiar doctrines, the issue of which was such an absolute identification of God the Father with Jesus Christ, that, in his own energetic manner, Tertullian says of him: "He has driven prophecy from Rome and has brought in heresy; he has put to flight the Paraclete, and crucified the Father."* In other words, he condemned Montanism, and attributed to God the sufferings of the Cross. This last accusation, which may be accepted only with certain qualifications, gained for the doctrine of Praxeas the name of *Patripassianism.* The head of the sect probably expressed himself in subtle and metaphysical language; he was not therefore at once understood by the leaders of the Church at Rome, who were always

* "Paracletum fugavit et Patrem crucifixit." (Tertullian, "Adv. Prax." chap. 1.)

somewhat inapt at religious philosophy. We thus account for the favour which he at first found, and by which even his subsequent adherents profited. He began by enunciating the dogma of the Divine unity with great energy, establishing the monarchy in the absolute sense.* The dogma of the Trinity, to judge by his representations, broke the primordial unity, and proposed three Gods for Christian worship, while there is in truth but one. Praxeas took his stand chiefly on the well-known text: "I am God, and there is none beside Me." He explained this by the saying of Jesus: "I and the Father are one. He who hath seen Me hath seen the Father."† He also cited, in support of his thesis, all the declarations of the Old Testament against polytheism.‡ Praxeas thus admitted no distinction of persons in God; he saw in Him only the Father or absolute principle of the universe. In the incarnation, the Most High united Himself to the human flesh of Jesus. Thus was established, for the first time, the distinction between the Father and the Son. The Father is in Jesus as the Divine principle; the Son represents the flesh. But the union of the two elements is so close that the Father shares the sufferings of the Son in His crucified body. "It was announced," says Praxeas, "by the angel to Mary, that that holy thing which should be born of her should be called the Son of God. Now it was the flesh which was born; it is the flesh then which is the Son of God."§ It follows

* "Monarchiam, inquiunt, tenemus." (Tertullian, chap. 3.)
† Tertullian, "Adv. Prax.," 20. ‡ Ibid., 18.
§ "Ecce, inquiunt, ab angelo prædicatum est: propterea quod nascetur sanctum, vocabitur Filius Dei. Caro itaque nata est, caro utique erit Filius Dei." (Ibid., 27.)

that this humanity is a mere semblance: it is but the corporeal covering of the Divine Spirit, which is at once the Word and the Father. Doubtless the Father does not suffer directly, but He suffers in the flesh which is united to Him, in His strange identification with the Son, who has no existence apart from Him, since He has no personality.* It is difficult to conceive what redemption can be on such a theory, except the final absorption of the finite in the infinite, and this is, in fact, the logical conclusion of the system.

The doctrine of Praxeas underwent numerous modifications before it assumed its final form. We have very incomplete documents upon the system of Bero.† He appears to have been the first to attempt to explain the transfusion of the Divine and the human in the person of Jesus, by the doctrine of the humiliation. The Divine stooped, and the human was raised and glorified by its participation with the higher element. Unhappily, Bero, refusing to accept the distinction of the Divine persons, could only recognise a very incomplete union between humanity and Deity. Apart from the doctrine of the incarnation of the Word, there were but two alternatives; either the total absorption of the Divine in the human, or a partial communication of the Divine nature to man; for it is simply impossible to conceive that the Father, in all the glory of His Godhead, can have been enshrined in Jesus, leaving, as it were, the throne of heaven empty.

Noëtus, of Smyrna, who came to Rome at the beginning of the third century, skilfully elaborated the

* Tertullian, "Adv. Prax.," 29.
† See Dorner, "Lehre von der Pers. Jesu," v. ii. 543.

doctrine of Praxeas, which had been already modified by Cleomenes. According to him there is but one God, who is called the Father, and who is the Creator of the universe. His will determines the mode of His existence, by which He becomes now visible, now invisible.* He determined to emerge from the absolute mode of uncreated existence, and submitted Himself to the law of birth in the person of Jesus, the offspring of the Virgin Mary. He thus appears as at once impassible and subject to suffering, immortal and mortal, since, exempt from pain by His own nature, He voluntarily endures the cross. He is called sometimes the Father, sometimes the Son, according as He is designated by one or other aspect of His nature. In this way the theophanies of the Old Testament are explained. The Father appeared as the Son to the saints and prophets, rendering Himself visible to them.† Noëtus thought to maintain thus the Divine unity. The Father and Son are absolutely one, the latter does not proceed from the former; it is always God who proceeds from God, only changing His name according to the divers conditions of His manifestation. He was the Son during His earthly career after He was born of the Virgin, and yet He was also the Father of all intelligent spirits.‡ In short, it is the great God of heaven who was nailed upon the cross, pierced by the soldier's spear, laid in the new sepulchre, and raised again from the dead.

* "Ενα φασὶν εἶναι θεὸν καὶ πατέρα, ἀφανῆ μὲν ὅταν ἐθέλῃ, φαινόμενον δὲ αὐτίκα ἂν βούληται. (Theodoret, "Hæretic. fabul.," iii. 3.)

† Εὐδοκήσαντα δὲ πεφηνέναι τοῖς ἀρχῆθεν δικαίοις ὄντα ἀόρατον. ("Phil.," ix. 10.)

‡ Ἓν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ φάσκων ὑπάρχειν πατέρα καὶ υἱὸν καλούμενον. (Ibid., ix. 10.)

The merit of Cleomenes and Noëtus consists in this —that they referred to the sovereign freedom of God the different modes of His being. He has the capacity of assuming a finite nature, and in so doing He performs an act of the will, and consequently of power. On the other hand, the doctrine of Noëtus necessarily issued in pantheism, since it made finite existence only the changing manifestation of the Godhead. This was a return to the incarnations of Vishnu. Did he complete his system by metempsychosis, as asserted by Epiphanius, who charges him with setting himself forth as Moses, returned to the land of the living?* It is possible. Jesus is after all, on this system, only the type of humanity; His personality is but one of the guises assumed by the great Divine Actor in the long drama of the incarnation, if we may borrow the language of Indian legends; there is nothing positive in it. Nor can our individuality be anything more defined. The same divine element which was in Moses reappears in Noëtus, as he who is called the angel of the Lord in the Old Testament takes the name of Jesus in the Gospel. This is a logical deduction.

Noëtus, cited before the elders of the Church of Rome, to give account of his doctrine, refused at first to reply. Then, emboldened by success, he expressed himself with a clearness which left no possibility of doubt. On a second accusation, he boldly answered his adversaries: "What evil have I then done? I glorify the one God; I own no other; it is He who was born, who suffered, who died." These sectaries, like Praxeas, took their stand on the texts of Scripture which refute polytheism,

* Epiphanius, "Hæres.," 57.

and in especial upon the declaration of God to Moses: "I am the God of thy fathers, there is no other God after me." "This," said they, "is what we believe. Therefore, when Jesus Christ comes to be born upon earth, we say it is the same God, Father and Son, who has been from the beginning, and who now comes down to us.*

The oriental monarchical school might think for a moment that it was about to triumph through the intrigues of the former slave Callisthus, who made use of his influence over the old Bishop Zephyrinus, in order to secure his own election. Faithful to the maxim that those who will receive court must pay court, he favoured in turns all the existing sects, that he might gather adherents on all hands; and he was ever ready to condemn one day those whom he had flattered and caught by his artifices the day before. He appears to have given substantial encouragement to the heresy of Cleomenes and Noëtus, and even to have espoused for some time their favourite ideas, for he defended them vigorously against Hippolytus, Bishop of Ostia. Callisthus had gained such a hold of the mind of Zephyrinus, that he dictated to him language which was the simple reproduction of the heresy of Noëtus. The Church of Rome, with amazement, heard its bishop thus express himself in a public assembly: "I acknowledge only one God, Jesus Christ, and no other beside Him, who was born and died."† It is true that Callisthus covered his retreat by such ambiguous words as these: "It is not the Father who

* Epiphanius, "Hæres.," 57.

† *Ἐγὼ οἶδα ἕνα θεον Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν καὶ πλὴν αὐτοῦ ἕτερον οὐδένα γενητὸν καὶ παθητόν.* ("Phil.," ix. 11.)

died, but the Son,"* thus designating the flesh of the Crucified, according to the terminology of Praxeas. This equivocal attitude did not prevent him from charging Christians, who, like Hippolytus, were faithful to the great traditions of the Church, with being ditheists, or worshippers of two Gods.†

Callisthus subsequently endeavoured to modify somewhat the form of Noetus' doctrine: he preserved its essential ideas, while combining them with those of Praxeas and Sabellius. According to him, the first principle is called the Word, and manifests itself under the three aspects of Father, Son, and Spirit. The universe is filled with the Divine Spirit; that Spirit who is identical with the Father, because incarnate in the womb of the Virgin. Thus Jesus could say, with reason: "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me." The Spirit, invisible in the person of Jesus Christ, is the Father; the visible humanity is the Son. We have then but one God, and escape all duality. The Christ is only one God, a single person. His flesh has been deified by union with the Divine element; and the Father, by His union with the flesh, had a sympathetic part in the sufferings on the Cross.‡ Thus, in the heretical phase of his career, Callisthus practised a true electicism, and sought to combine all the elements of monarchism. He did not found a school, in the strict sense of the word, but simply a faction, a party, in which intrigues were of more importance than ideas. Originality was

* "Phil.," ix. 11. † Ἀπεκάλει ἡμᾶς διθέους. (Ibid., ix. 11.)

‡ Τὸ μὲν γὰρ βλεπόμενον, ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος, τοῦτο εἶναι τὸν υἱὸν, τὸ δὲ ἐν τῷ υἱῷ χωρηθὲν πνεῦμα τοῦτο εἶναι τὸν πατέρα. Ὁ πατὴρ τὴν σάρκα ἐθεοποίησεν—τὸν πατέρα συμπεπονθέναι τῷ υἱῷ. (Ibid., ix. 12.

not so much desiderated as *finesse*. As soon as Callisthus had attained his ends, he condemned his late allies, and declared himself on the side of rigid orthodoxy.

Sabellius of Lybia, a contemporary of Callisthus, since he died in the year 260, gave to monarchism a much more definite form, and endeavoured to reconcile it with the Trinitarian doctrines which had acquired new precision in the Church.* He landed, nevertheless, only in positive pantheism. Returning to the philosophical language of Alexandria, he designated the first principle under the name of Monas, or Unity.† This is the Supreme Being of Philo, motionless and silent. He does not remain, however, in absolute repose, and creation does not proceed from him by the way of emanation. He Himself produces or organises the world; His activity is like the hand or the arm stretched out. It is ever the same arm, but in stretching itself forth, it works. The Eternal Being breaks silence; He speaks. The word He utters is the Logos.‡ We must set aside here all idea of a distinct substance, of hypostasis and personality. The Logos is only a new mode of the Divine Being; it is that Being diffusing Himself abroad, passing from inaction to activity. Was this active operation

* On the doctrine of Sabellius, see Athanasius, "Contra Arianos oratio," iv., c. 2, 9, 13, 14-25; "Exposit fidei," 2; Epiphanius, "Hæres.," 62; Eusebius, "H. E.," vii. 6; Theodoret, "Hæretic. fabul.," ii. 9.

† Μίαν ὑπόστασιν εἶναι τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν υἱὸν καὶ τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα. (Theodoret, "Hæretic. fabul.," ii. 9.)

‡ Τὸν θεὸν σιωπῶντα μὲν ἀνενέργητον λαλοῦντα δὲ ἰσχύειν. (Athanasius, "Contra Arian. orat." iv. 11.) Εἴγε σιωπῶν μὲν οὐκ ἠδύνατο ποιεῖν λαλῶν δὲ κτίζειν ἤρξατο. (Ibid., 25.)

the producing cause of the world, or merely that which gave organisation to it? Are we confronted here with a Platonist dualism, or with a complete pantheism, which regards all created life as only the expansion of the life divine? The contemporary systems of Noetus and Callisthus lead us to interpret the system of Sabellius in the latter sense. Creation, then, is nothing else than the extended hand of God, His word, His manifestation.

The action of God in relation to the world assumes three new forms, which do not help to suggest the idea of personality. He reveals Himself alternately as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.* The Father has often been confounded with the original Monas. It is easy to understand how Christian thought, accustomed to see in the Father the first person of the Trinity, should with some difficulty have disabused itself of this idea. But, evidently, Sabellius himself did not so confound the two. It is not possible that the Father should appear twice in His system, first as the Monas before the world, and then as the first mode of the divine activity in creation.† In the same manner the Word must be carefully distinguished from the Son, since the Word designates the transition in God from silence to speech, from repose to creative activity, while the Son has His part only in the world already created, and after the

* Ὁ *πατὴρ πλατύνεται δὲ εἰς υἱὸν καὶ πνεῦμα.* (Athanasius, "Contra Arian. orat.," iv. 25.) Ἡ *μονὰς πλατυνθεῖσα γέγονε τριάς.* (Ibid., 13.)

† Athanasius, who has more than once confounded the *Monas* with the *Father*, yet himself preserved the distinction: Εἰ *μὴ ἡ Μονὰς ἄλλο τι ἐστι παρὰ τὸν πατέρα.* He adds: *ἡ μονὰς τριὰν ποιητική.* (Ibid., iv. 13.) He calls the Monas, *υἱοπάτορα.* (Athanasius, "De synodis," 16.)

commencement of human history.* This deviation from the received language of the Church attaching a new sense to consecrated words, did much to bring obscurity upon the system of Sabellius, which in a constructive point of view was singularly clear. He compares the three modes of divine action sometimes to the sun, which is at once the focus of light, the beam which irradiates, and the flame which warms;† sometimes to the faculties of the human soul, sometimes to the divine gifts of the Holy Spirit.‡ The primeval and eternal Monas lives again entirely in its various manifestations. Each of these returns to its source and is there absorbed, just as the solar ray returns to its focus. God revealed Himself as the Father in the giving of the law; this is the period of the Old Covenant. He revealed Himself as the Son in the incarnation of Jesus, in whom all His fulness dwells. Lastly, He reveals Himself as the Spirit in the illumination of the Apostles and of the Church.§ His manifestation as the Father ended with the Old Testament, otherwise He would not have been fully manifested in the Son. It follows

* The distinction between the Word and the Son appears already in this passage of Athanasius: *Φασὶ μὴ εἰρῆσθαι ἐν τῇ παλαιᾷ περὶ υἱοῦ ἀλλὰ περὶ λόγου καὶ διὰ τοῦτο νεώτερον ὑπονοεῖν τοῦ λόγου τὸν υἱὸν διωβεβαιοῦνται.* (Athanasius, "Contra Arian.," iv. 22.) "They say that the Son is not spoken of in the Old Testament, but only the Word. Hence the Son is, according to them, posterior to the Word." Athanasius says plainly that Sabellius dared to distinguish the Son from the Word: *Τολμῶν διαιρεῖν λογὸν καὶ υἱόν.* (Athanasius, "De synodis.," 15.) † Epiphanius, "Hæres.," 62.

‡ *Ὥσπερ αἱρεσεις χαρισμάτων.* (Athanasius, "Contra Arian.," iv. 25.)

§ *Καὶ ἐν μὲν τῇ παλαιᾷ ὡς πατέρα νομοθετῆσαι. ἐν τῇ καινῇ ὡς υἱὸν ἐνανθρωπῆσαι ὡς πνεῦμα δὲ ἅγιον τοῖς ἀποστόλοις ἐπιφοιτῆσαι.* (Theodoret, "Hæretic fabul.," ii. 9.)

that the incarnation was itself but a temporary fact, which ceased so soon as its end was attained. The Christ-God has not retained any distinct personality. Sabellius, therefore, falls as far short as Ebionitism of the recognition of His true dignity. The Holy Spirit, who is the existing form of the divine operation in the world, and who is the soul of the present economy, will be in the same manner reabsorbed in the primeval Monas; and with Him, it seems, all finite existence will cease. Although Sabellius does not express himself clearly upon this point, it is so fully in harmony with the logic of his system, that we may regard it as established.* He appears to have very slightly handled the doctrine of sin and of redemption. Evidently, in his view, salvation is absorption in God; redemption is a mere cosmological development; religious history is the history of the Deity Himself, and not the relations of the created with the Creator. Sabellianism is, on this point, entirely in accordance with oriental religious and gnostic doctrines. The drama of the universe has but one sole actor—the transcendent, infinite, impersonal God—who by the expansion of His own being produces the world, and annihilates it by a corresponding process of contraction. Only Sabellius, warned by the condemnation of the Gnostics, speaks in guarded

* According to Epiphanius, the Son is reabsorbed in the primeval Monas so soon as the work of redemption is achieved. Hence it may be concluded that the Holy Spirit and the mode of existence which He represents will terminate in the same way. (See Epiphanius, "Hæres.," 62.) Moreover, Athanasius tells us that Sabellius taught formally the extinction in God of the creation: *"Ωσπερ γὰρ διὰ τὸ κτίσαι ἐπλατύνθη, οὕτω πανομένου τοῦ πλατυσμοῦ παύσεται καὶ ἡ κτισις.* (Athanasius, "Contra Arian.," iv. 13.)

language, and endeavours as far as possible to bring his doctrine into conformity with the formulas of the Church, which is at this time beginning to accept Trinitarian ideas.

Let us remark, in closing this chapter, that Unitarianism pursued the same course as Ebionitism, and proved itself equally incapable of adhering to an abstract deism. The yearning after a living God is so deep and ardent in the human soul, that when it sees upon the throne of heaven only a distant Deity, who is nothing more than a cold idea, it falls inevitably—or rather, it flings itself instinctively—into the arms of a pantheism more or less subtle or materialistic. This tendency is especially irresistible when the general current of the reigning philosophy is in that direction, as in the age of Neo-Platonism and Gnosticism. In fine, the heresy most fraught with peril at this time for Christian theology was naturalistic speculation, the heir of ancient Paganism.

CHAPTER VI.

THE APOCRYPHAL LITERATURE OF THE SECOND AND THIRD CENTURIES, AND ITS INFLUENCE UPON THE FORMATION OF ORAL TRADITION.

Beside the writings in which the principal heretics formulated their systems, we have, in the second and third centuries, a whole fictitious sacred literature, which shelters under the most revered names of primitive Christianity the favourite ideas of Gnosticism, or the legends created by the popular imagination. The "Clementines" form a sort of intermediary link between the exposition of the heretical systems and the apocryphal legends, for they present the most singular blending of dialectic treatises with arbitrarily invented fables. They make no pretension to add to the sacred books; the work is a mere romance, embodying the views of a certain school. It is otherwise with the apocryphal literature, which advances positive claims to form part of primitive revelation. In spite of its intellectual poverty, barely concealed beneath the brilliant mantle of legendary inventions, this literature possesses no small interest for us. In the first place, it was the most rapid vehicle of heresy. Again, it enables us to trace, with some degree of certainty, in the Church itself, the current of popular tradition,

and to recognise what were the elements it carried along in its course, and what was its own bent and tendency. A very inadequate notion will be formed of the movement of religious ideas in any age, if it is regarded only in its highest achievements, and studied only in the profound works of illustrious teachers. We need to know also how these great truths present themselves to the masses of the people, and what form they assume in their receptive and somewhat sensuous imagination. Numberless superstitions, like parasitic plants, quickly overspread the vigorous stem of revelation. In their unhealthy brilliance, they remind one of the luxuriant tropical creepers of Indian forests, and they exhale indeed the same atmosphere; for in the early ages of Christianity it was always from the far East that those influences were derived which tended most largely to sophisticate the faith of the gospel.

That which is most strange, is the ascendency gradually obtained by this popular superstition. At first it excited only contempt, and was even formally anathematized. Nevertheless, it won its way into the minds of men, and went on circulating noiselessly among the lower classes, who never trouble themselves about the controversies of the schools, till it acquired a moral authority which makes it an important element in the Church's history. That which is proscribed and denounced as superstition in one century often becomes the authorised doctrine of another, and its circulation is not only suffered, but sanctioned. The doctors of these changed times find excellent reasons for its adoption, and frame for it an illustrious pedigree,

as a heraldic emblem is made to cover some flaw in a title of nobility. Popular tradition is like the persistent waves, which, by their ceaseless breaking on the shore, gradually change its form under their slow but resistless action. In the same manner has tradition wrought imperceptibly upon the solid strata of the Christian religion, and it is at its hand we must seek the explanation of the great changes we shall observe in the doctrine and morality of Christianity from age to age. It is important, then, to trace the singular and often utterly strange forms assumed by Christian facts and ideas in the numerous apocryphal writings which critical science has placed at our disposal.

Apocryphal literature divides itself into two branches, the one decidedly heretical, the other only legendary in its origin; though heresy has made many attempts to engraft itself upon it, and has modified it to suit its own purposes.

The writings which belong to the first class have almost all disappeared; they have followed the fortune of an exploded and vanished theory. On the other hand, the greater part of the apocryphal writings, which are only legendary, not having excited such keen opposition, have survived: they were the favourite reading of the simple and the ignorant, and they have been preserved with the tenacity inherent in all truly popular literature.

§ I. *Apocryphal Writings positively Heretical.*

Mention is made of a number of Gospels attributed to the heretics. No one of these has come down to

us in its integrity. The fragmentary quotations of these Gospels, scattered through the writings of the Fathers, suffice to make us acquainted with their general character. They are almost all derived from a primitive type, which they have altered or overlaid according to their several systems. The Gospel of Matthew has been most largely manipulated by Judæo-Christians of every shade of opinion, and these amended versions have been distinguished by various names. The so-called Gospel of the *Hebrews*, spoken of by Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Eusebius, and Jerome, is the most important of these versions.* It was written in the Aramean tongue: the Nazarenes and Ebionites made use of it exclusively.† It may possibly have undergone some modifications in passing from the one to the other sect. In any case, a comparison of this Gospel of the Hebrews with our first Gospel is fully sufficient to show that it has none of the characters of an original writing.‡ The narrative is overlaid with legendary incidents.§ It is sometimes corrected, with the evident

* Hegesippus apud Eusebius, "H. E.," iv. 22; Eusebius, "H. E.," iii. 25, 27; Clement of Alexandria, "Strom.," ii. 9, 45; Origen, "In Joann.," ii. 6 (vol. iv. 63). "Quod Chaldaico quidem Syroque sermone sed Hebraicis litteris scriptum est." (Saint Jerome, "Adv. Pelag.," lib. iii. c. 1.) See on this question of the apocryphal Gospels, M. Nicolas' book. (Michel Lévy.)

† There is no ground for making a distinction, as M. Nicolas does ("Evangiles apocryphes," p. 60), between the Gospel of the Hebrews and that of the Nazarenes, when it is once admitted that the former underwent some changes in passing from one sect to the other. The Gospel of *the twelve apostles* (Origen "Homil. i. in Luke") is identical with the Gospel of the Hebrews.

‡ M. Nicolas maintains the contrary opinion. We do not think that he says anything to contravene the strong reasoning of Bleek in his Introduction to the New Testament (p. 106, and following).

§ We may mention the incident quoted by Origen, that the Holy Spirit transported Jesus on to Mount Tabor by lifting Him

intention of getting rid of a chronological difficulty.* Both the additions and suppressions by which the canonical text is modified, bear the impress of a preconceived system. The suppression of the first two chapters, which contain the account of the miraculous conception, is characteristic of the school which would not acknowledge the eternal Godhead of Jesus.† For the same reason, the Gospel of the Hebrews, on the occasion of the baptism of Jesus, puts into the mouth of the Father the words, "*To-day* have I begotten Thee." The place given to this text in such a connection was evidently designed to confirm the idea that the divinity of Christ dated from His solemn consecration by the Baptist.‡ The influence of Gnostic or Essenian Ebionitism is easy to discern in the curious passage in which the Spirit is spoken of as the *mother of Jesus*.§ Undoubtedly we have here that eternal female element which formed part of the

by one hair of His head (Origen, "In Joann.," vol. ii. ch. 6). The Gospel of the Hebrews sometimes combines also the Gospel of Matthew with that of Luke. The fragment on the Resurrection, quoted in the Epistle of Ignatius to the Smyrneans (c. 3), is an imitation of Luke xxiv. 39.

* The Gospel of the Hebrews does away with the great difficulty relating to Zachariah, whom our Matthew erroneously calls the son of Barachia or Baruch (Matt. xxiii. 35), while he was in truth the son of Jehoiada. He is so spoken of in the apocryphal Gospel (Jerome, "Comm. in Matt.," xxiii. 35). We have another clear proof that the apocryphal Gospel is subsequent to our Greek Gospel. It mentions that John the Baptist's food in the wilderness was cakes of honey, not locusts. (Epiphanius "Hæres.," xxx. 13.) Evidently the interpolater read in Matt. iii. 4, ἐγκρίδες instead of ἀκρίδες. This confusion of words implies the antecedence of the Greek to that of the first Gospel.

† Epiphanius, "Hæres.," xxx. 14.

‡ Ibid., xxx. 13.

§ Ἄρτι ἐλαβέ με ἡ μήτηρ μου τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα. (Origen, "Homil. xv. in Jeremiah," 4, vol. iii. 224.)

primordial duality of the Elkasaites, and which they likened to the Holy Spirit. The Gospel of the Hebrews considerably modifies the declaration which at the commencement of the Sermon on the Mount asserts the permanence of the law of the prophets. It makes Christ say: "I am come to abrogate the sacrifices,"* thus sanctioning one of the most important innovations of Gnostic Judaism, which insisted on the abolition of the sacrifices of blood. At the time of instituting the Lord's Supper, Jesus, according to this same Gospel, pronounced these words: "Have I then indeed desired to eat with you the flesh of the paschal lamb."† Here we note the strong antipathy of the Essenian Ebionites to all animal food. Clearly a very definite system can be traced through all these emendations of the Gospel history.

The modifications are still more considerable in the "Gospel of the Egyptians," which appears to have been in the same manner based upon the Gospel of Matthew‡. This is known to us chiefly through Clement of Alexandria, and by the second (apocryphal) letter of Clement of Rome. The passages which have been preserved have an odour of ascetic theosophy which cannot be mistaken, in spite of the effort made by Clement of Alexandria to construe them in an orthodox sense. Let us cite the leading passages: "The Lord replied to one who asked Him when His kingdom should come, 'It shall come when two shall be one; when the external shall be identified with the internal, and the male with the female, so that

* Epiphanius, "Hæres.," xxx. 16. † Ibid., xxx. 22.
‡ Ibid., lxii.; Origen, "Homil. i. in Luke."

there shall be neither male nor female.'"* The allusion here is clearly to the suppression of all distinction between the body and soul; the body is that which is external, the soul that which is internal. We know also that in the symbolic language of Gnosticism, the material element is represented by the feminine, and the spiritual by the masculine. Clement of Alexandria thus supplemented this strange text: "It shall come when you shall have thrown off the garb of modesty."† The garments of skins in which God clothed Adam and Eve in Eden, to hide their nakedness, were likened to the body by all the Jewish theosophists. Matter, corporeality, is then to be dissolved, in order that the kingdom of Jesus may be set up. The same idea underlies another passage, not less enigmatical. "When Salome asked the Lord how long death should reign, 'It shall reign,' He replied, 'so long as you women bring forth children.' 'I rejoice, then,' said Salome, 'never to have brought forth. The Lord replied, 'Eat of every herb, but take not that which is bitter.'"‡ The bitter herb which produces death is evidently marriage. There can be no doubt that this is the meaning of this injunction, when we compare it with another saying ascribed to Jesus: "I am come to destroy the work of the woman."§ The woman is that earthly Eve who in Gnosticism represents the material element, that seductive maid of Indian fables

* *Ὅταν γένηται τὰ δύο ἓν καὶ τὸ ἄῤῥεν μετὰ τῆς θελείας.* (Clement, "Strom.," iii. 13, 92.) Clement of Rome, 2nd ep., ch. cxcii.)

† *Ὅταν τὸ τῆς αἰσχύνης ἔνδυμα πατήσετε.* ("Strom.," iii. 13, 92.) M. Nicolas' interpretation is conclusive on this point.

‡ Clement of Alexandria, "Strom.," iii. 6, 45. § Ibid., iii. 9, 63.

who encompasses the soul and consumes the life of the spirit. The Gospel of the Egyptians was rightly named, for the land of Egypt, close to the synagogue where Philo had taught, was the fitting birthplace for this hybrid product of modified Judæo-Christianity and modified Gnosticism. We hear again of a Gospel of Peter, of which the only known speciality was its supposition of a previous marriage of Joseph, the offspring of which were the brothers and sisters of the Lord. This tradition was designed to guarantee the perpetual virginity of Mary, and to place her outside the pale of the ordinary conditions of humanity.* The Gospel of Peter was another version of that of Matthew. The "Preaching of Peter," of which so much is said in the "Clementines," was probably a legendary account of the controversies between Peter and Simon Magus. This is very apparent from the analysis given of it in the "Recognitions."† The Gnostics, properly so called, have not failed to mutilate at pleasure the sacred writings. Basilides had contented himself with writing a commentary, for it is false to accuse him of having sought to make a gospel of his own.‡ The Valentinians and Manichæans were less scrupulous. They boldly composed gospels, making use of the narratives of Luke and John, which they completely remoulded. The Fathers refer to a gospel, called *the gospel of truth*,§ in which Valentinus embodied the most absolute

* Eusebuis, "H. E." vi. 12. Serapion, bishop of Antioch in 170, had found it in use in the Church of Rhossus in Cilicia. He at once perceived that it favoured docetism.

† Recognitions, vol. iii. c. 75. ‡ Origen, "Preface to Luke."

§ Irenæus, "Adv. hæres." iii. 11.

pantheism, as may be gathered from this fragment: "I halted upon a high mountain, and heard a voice like thunder saying to me, 'I am thou, and thou art I; wherever thou art, I am. I am shed abroad in all.'"* We may further mention the *gospel of perfection*, as it was called, and "the Great and Small Interrogatories of Mary." Lastly, also, the gospel ascribed to Philip. All these writings had the same pantheistic basis; the theme was only varied by the diversity of the symbols, which were often obscure.

The following fragment from the so-called Gospel of Philip seems to allude to the rites of initiation in some Valentinian sect: "The Lord has revealed that which the soul ought to say when it rises to the heavens, and how it ought to reply to the celestial powers. 'I have come to know myself,' it shall say. 'I have not engendered sons of Archon, but I have torn up my roots and gathered together my scattered members, and I have learned to know what thou art.'"† These words ascribe salvation to knowledge and asceticism. In them is a remembrance of the famous mysteries of Bacchus, in which the torn members of the young god represented the dispersion of beings at the moment of creation, while the resurrection symbolised the universal palingenesis by the return to unity.

The Gospel of Marcion is simply an expurgated edition of the Gospel of Luke. All the narratives, all the words even, which might in any degree favour Judaism, are omitted. The question of authenticity is completely merged in that of doctrine: it is the

* Epiphanius, "Hæres," xxvi. 3. † Ibid., xxvi. 13.

most arbitrary, the most audaciously subjective criticism that could be conceived. The first two chapters of the third gospel are omitted. Marcion sets aside the account of the baptism of Jesus, of His temptations, His genealogy and a multitude of sayings which refer to the bond between the two covenants, and represent the manifestation of Jesus as the fulfilment of prophecy. The parable of the vine, which speaks of the prophets as the precursors of the Son; the teaching which ascribes to divine justice the falling of the Tower of Siloam; the triumphal entry into Jerusalem; the agony in Gethsemane, and the Ascension; all these are rejected for preconceived reasons. The same system of elimination is applied to points of detail. Thus, Marcion will not recognise the appeal of Jesus to the example of Jonas and of the Queen of Sheba (Luke xi. 30-33); or His words reproaching the Jews with having shed the blood of the prophets (xi. 47); or His invocation of the testimony of Moses to the resurrection of the dead (xx. 37); or His allusions to the Passover (xxii. 15, 16); or to the twelve tribes of Israel (xxii. 30). He would also, without scruple, entirely change anything that was offensive to him in the fragments preserved. He modified in the following manner the declarations of the Lord as to the immutability of the law (Luke xvi. 17): "Heaven and earth shall pass away, *as shall also the law and the prophets*, but not one jot or tittle of my words shall fail." These examples suffice to justify Tertullian's assertion with regard to Marcion: "He suppressed all that was contrary to his opinion, and retained only that which was in harmony with it."

If he did not always succeed in logically carrying out his idea, this slight inconsistency in no way affects the general and dominant fact.*

The apocryphal gospels which we have just mentioned were for the most part simply falsifications of our canonical gospels. Like the false colours with which some master-pieces of painting have been overlaid, they were quickly to disappear under the influence of time. The productions of heresy, which were not mere parasitic overgrowths, were to be more durable. The creation offered more resistance to the destroying hand of time when the canvas had been carefully fabricated as well as the design upon it.† We have in this class first a curious gospel ascribed to Thomas, which is based entirely on the docetist stand-point.‡ It treats of the childhood of Jesus, and so piles up prodigies in that period of His life, that it is altogether withdrawn from the laws of gradual and truly human development. The child Jesus is a sort of capricious and all-powerful genius, who deals with matter as He will, and multiplies

* All the fragments of the Gospel of Marcion are found collected in De Wette's "Introduction to the New Testament." See Bleck's treatment of the same subject ("Einlant. in N. T.," p. 122 and following). M. Nicolas ("Evan. apocr.," p. 147 and following) concludes, as we think, erroneously, from some inconsistencies of Marcion, that he did not change the Gospel of Luke to suit his own school.

† For the apocryphal gospels, the reader is referred to the collection published by Tischendorf ("Evang. apocryph.," Leipzig, 1853). See also Thilo, "Codex apocryph. N. T.," Leipzig, 1832.

‡ The antiquity of the Gospel of Thomas is beyond question. It is mentioned in Irenæus, "Adv. Hæres.," i. 17. See Origen, "Homil. I. in Lucam." "Scio evangelium quod appellatur secundum Thomam." See also "Phil.," vol. vii. p. 141. We cite this Gospel according to Tischendorf ("Evang. apocryph.," Leipzig, 1853). He gives three manuscripts—two Greek and one Latin.

miracles to gratify His anger or His fancy. For example, He gives life to little clay figures of birds which He has amused Himself by making, and they take wing and fly away. He destroys as easily as He creates. A child falls down stark dead, because he has jumped upon Christ's shoulders. Another turns aside the little water channels which Jesus has been hollowing out in play, and his hand is at once dried up in punishment of his daring. These chastisements again call for fresh miracles, for Jesus consents to undo the work of His own revenge, and raises to life again those whom He had killed. His chief characteristic is an implacable spirit. Thus the inhabitants of Nazareth come to Joseph and say:—"With such a child, thou canst not dwell in the same town with us, unless thou teach Him to bless instead of cursing, for he slays our children.* This not unreasonable remonstrance is roughly rebuked. The miraculous power of the Divine child is displayed on the most trifling occasions. If He goes to draw water for His mother, He brings it back in the skirt of His garment. He has no need of tools in order to plane the planks of which a yoke is to be made in Joseph's workshop; and when He sows His father's field, the crop is so abundant that He can feed all the poor of the place. But the prodigy most insisted on in the Gospel of Thomas is the marvellous wisdom of the child, who instructs all his masters, and chastises them without mercy, when they do not yield to Him. Thus is formed

* *Σὺ τοιοῦτον παιδίον ἔχων οὐ δύνασαι μεθ' ἡμῶν οἰκεῖν.* ("Evang Thomæ.," A, c. 4.)

in the popular legend the notion of a terrible child-Christ, whom none but His mother can appease. The first of His masters is called Zaccheus. He is anxious to teach the boy all that childhood should know, and seeks to instil, as his first lesson, respect for old age. But the result proves that it is he who needs to be instructed. When the child questions him upon the meaning of the first letters of the alphabet, he is silent. "Thou knowest not the nature of the Alpha," says Jesus to him, "and how then canst thou teach others the Beta?"* These words indicate to us the origin of this gospel, for they betray the influence of the famous Gnostic Marcus. It is known that he based his incoherent system on a symbolical explanation of the letters of the alphabet. Nothing could more favour the development of the chimeras of Gnosticism than this atmosphere of the pseudo-marvellous, which took away from the childhood of Jesus all human reality, and made him descend from Heaven as a pure ray of light and power enshrouded in an earthly form. Beholding His miracles, the inhabitants of Nazareth exclaim: "This child is not made like one of us, for He can subdue even fire. He was before the creation of the world. What sublime being is He then? a God or an angel? He is a heavenly child. Whence is it that every word spoken by Him becomes at once an act?"†

We find in the title of one of the editions of this curious writing this very significant saying: "As

* Σὺ τὸ ἄλφι μὴ εἰδὼς κατὰ φύσιν, τὸ βῆτα πῶς ἄλλους διδάσκεις. ("Evang. Thomæ.," A, c. 6.)

† Οὗτος τί μέγα ἐστὶν ἢ ἄγγελος. (Ibid., A, c. 7.)

Jesus was in his body at Nazareth."* This is pure docetism.

Heresy has found a still more congenial soil in the legendary accounts of the apostles than in the apocryphal gospels. The substance of these narratives was in existence antecedently to heresy, and co-ordinately with it, as we may know from the "Apostolic Acts," the falsification of which cannot be laid to its account. It is even probable that it has only added a few bold touches. Christian antiquity charged these falsifications on a Gnostic named Lucius Charinus, who lived on the borders of the second or third century, but whose particular school of doctrine is unknown.† The falsifications for which he is held responsible cannot be all from his hand. Grave and numerous as they were, and condemned officially by the Church, they nevertheless exercised a great influence upon it, silently preparing the way for the triumph of more than one error and superstition. The "Apostolic Acts" most obviously accepted, or modified by the Gnostic and Manichæan heresies, were "The Acts of Andrew and Matthew," "The Martyrdom of Matthew, and "The Acts of Thomas." The first-named do not bear the impress of any particular system; they belong rather to the category of popular legends, which have contributed directly to the for-

* *Ἀναστρεφόμενος σωματικῶς ἐν πόλει Ναζαρέτ.* ("Evang. Thomæ," B, 1.)

† In actibus conscriptis a Leucio. August. "De Actis cum Felice Manich.," ii. 6. Photius, "Bibliotheca. Codex.," 114. On the great number of these apocryphal acts, see Eusebius, "H. E.," iii. 25; Epiphanius, "Hæres.," 61. We quote from Tischendorf, "Acta apostol. apocrypha." 1851.

mation of oral tradition. "The Acts of Andrew and of Matthew" turn on the mission of these two apostles among the "Anthropophagi."* The narrative, which is a tissue of gross fables, concludes with the description of the martyrdom of Andrew, tortured at once by demons and Anthropophagi, who finally decapitate him. Every bleeding shred of his flesh becomes a living tree. The murderous city is engulfed in floods of water, and is only saved by a speedy repentance. Andrew raises the dead and builds a temple on this inhospitable shore. Among other strange miracles, it is recorded that the very sphinxes poured forth from their stony mouths anthems of praise to Christ. That which is more serious in this ridiculous writing, and that which gained it so much favour among the Gnostics, was its account of the manifold transformations of Jesus, who appears now under the form of a ship's captain, to command Andrew to rejoin Matthew, now under the form of a little child.† His incarnation is thus placed on a par with the fanciful metamorphoses of Indian mythology, which all tend to sustain docetism. "The Martyrdom of Matthew" presents the same characteristics, only more pronounced.‡ Jesus Christ appears to His apostle as an angel from Paradise, and speaks to him in the

* The "Acts of Andrew and Matthew" belong to the same period as those of Andrew, mentioned by Eusebius and Epiphanius ("loc. cit."). The Gnostics and the Manichæans made use of them.

† Τὴν ὥσπερ ἄνθρωπος πρωρεύς. ("Acts of Andrew and Matthew," c. 5.)

‡ The "Acts and Martyrdom of Matthew" are the continuation of the "Acts of Andrew and Matthew."

language of very decided Gnosticism, with a voice soft as the myrrh of love. "I am," he says, "Paradise, the Paraclete, the representative of the heavenly powers, the strength of men of chastity, the crown of virgins, the foundation of the Church.* Transcendent asceticism is thus glorified with a mystical exaltation. Matthew lives by mortification; he fasts during forty days before setting forth on his mission, which is to plant the tree of life in the city of the Anthropophagi. These savages have no sooner eaten of it than they become civilized and cover their nakedness; they are baptized in the fountain which springs from the foot of the sacred tree, around which cling the branches of a vine. Clearly the whole narrative had a symbolic meaning. The martyrdom of Matthew, who falls a victim to the wrath of the savage king, is described with great detail. The fire which is to consume, falls as dew over the apostle, but is transformed into a furious dragon to devour his enemies. The apostle succumbs in the end, but his body and his garments are unharmed, and the sick who touch his bed are healed.†

The "Acts of Thomas" transport us into that mysterious land of India, to which Gnosticism was ever drawn as to its cradle.‡ The preaching of the Apostle Thomas there is indeed useless, for the Christianity which he proclaims is worthy of the Brahmins and

* Ἡ δύναμις τῶν ἄνω δυνατῶν ἐγώ, ὁ στέφανος τῶν παρθένων. ("Acts and Martyrdom of Matthew," 2.)

† Ἀψάμενοι μόνον τῆς κλίνης ἐσώθησαν. (Ibid., 23.)

‡ Their antiquity is not questioned. (Eusebius, "H. E.," iii. 25; Epiphanius, "Hæres.," 61.)

the disciples of Buddah; it is a stream which flows back to its source. Thomas has received his mission from Jesus Christ. Faithful to his character, he first declines it through lack of faith, but afterwards sets out disguised as a carpenter, having hired himself to a servant of the king of the town of Gundaphora, who is seeking workmen from all parts to build him a palace. Thomas, as soon as he lands upon the Indian continent, enters, with his companion, a town where a feast is being held. It is the celebration of the marriage of the king's daughter. According to the customs of oriental hospitality, all who arrive are bidden to the feast. Thomas refuses to conform to the pagan customs of the country; a servant strikes him on the face, and is immediately after devoured by a lion, when he goes to draw water from the stream. A flute-player, a Jewess by birth, appears at the close of the feast. She alone understands the symbolic hymn sung by Thomas to the praise of the bride. The young spouse is, in the eyes of the apostle, the personification of that feminine element which plays so important a part in the Gnostic systems, and which is confounded in them with the Holy Spirit. He celebrates her beauty in the strain of a hierophant, making her the type of the mysteries of the Pleroma. He compared the slopes of her neck to the lower steps of the scale of emanations. Her two hands represent the choir of happy Æons. The number of the friends of the bride and bridegroom has also a symbolic meaning, recalling the use of the *Hebdomas* and *Ogdoas* in Gnosticism. Thomas sees, in their evolutions, the eternal cycle of the Æons, when they drink the mystic wine

which quenches all thirst and hunger, and when they celebrate the father of truth and the mother of wisdom.*

We must not expect to find in this song the precision of a system, but its general tone is obviously mystic. Thomas, solicited by the king to bless the young pair upon the threshold of their nuptial chamber, preaches absolute asceticism to them in words which are the echo of the Buddhist precepts. He pronounces a woe upon marriage, which produces only suffering, vice, and death; and he persuades the young man and woman to be content with a purely spiritual union.† The next day the parents of the bride ask her the reason of the joy which beams in her face. "I have refused," she says, "the work of shame and ignominy." The young man thanks Thomas for having revealed to him the mystery of his being, and rendered him capable of becoming again what he was before his descent into the region of matter and of *change*. The king seeks out the fatal magician who has turned the wedding feast for him into a bitter mourning; but the apostle has already quitted this barbarous shore. He soon reaches his destination, and practises the severest asceticism, eating only rice bread and drinking nothing but water.

Charged by the King of Gundaphora to build him a palace, he receives for that purpose large sums of gold and silver, but he hastens to distribute them among the poor. When the king comes to inspect the new building, he finds only the bare ground. "I

* Τὸν πατέρα τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ τὴν μητέρα τῆς σοφίας. ("Acts of Thomas," p. 7.)

† Ἐὰν ἀπαλλαγῆτε τῆς ῥυπαρᾶς κοινωνίας ταύτης. (Ibid., 12.)

have built thy palace in heaven," says Thomas.* This palace of charity seems to the king a poor substitute for the pillars of marble and gold which he had thought to dwell amongst. He casts the apostle into prison till he shall ascertain whether this palace of charity has any real existence. The soul of his brother appears to him, to ask him for a place in the celestial mansion to which the angels had carried him immediately after his death. The king then understands that the apostle had given him a dwelling far preferable to that which he had desired.† Nothing could embody more distinctly than this legend the idea of a purely external method of salvation, since it was made the reward of almsgiving that was not even intended. It is on this very same principle that pious endowments have been lavishly made by princes whose names are sullied by the darkest crimes. It was convenient to them to build a mansion in the heavens with the fruit of their rapacious robberies on earth. In none of the discourses of Thomas, moreover, do we find any trace of the doctrine of redemption. The great essential is a knowledge of the mysteries and the practice of asceticism. Exaggerated importance is attached to baptism and the anointing with oil. The baptismal formula is modified to suit the Gnostic sense. The apostle says to the neophyte: "May there come upon thee the name of Christ, which is above every name; may there come upon thee the power of the Most High and His perfect mercy; may there come upon thee the sublime anointing and the compassionate mother; may there come upon thee the economy of the male,

* "Acts of Thomas," 20, 21. † Ibid., 23-25.

the revelation of the hidden mysteries, the mother of the seven abodes, who shall give thee the repose of the eighth."* We trace here the *syzygies* or couples of the emanation theory, the Hebdomas, the Ogdoas—in a word, all the complicated and confused technicalities of Gnosticism. The "Acts of Thomas" enrich Christian mythology with a vast number of fanciful prodigies wrought by the apostle: he seems to try to rival the magicians of India. He interlards his raisings of the dead with ascetic discourses, which issue in the celebration of baptism according to the rites of heresy. The Lord's Supper assumes the same character. The stress laid upon the material element is very significant. The bread of the Eucharist is fashioned into the form of a cross.† The baptismal water is impregnated with a Divine virtue, which imparts to it a purifying influence. "Come," says the apostle, "come, healing force, and dwell in these waters, and let the anointing of the Holy Spirit be thus realised in them."‡ The Holy Spirit is always likened to the feminine element; it is the mystic dove, which brings rest to the soul by the revelation of the great mysteries. The abode of the dead is described by one raised from the grave in the most gloomy colours. The account of the death of the apostle is treated in that symbolic manner which found so much favour with the Gnostics. The four soldiers who led him to his torture are compared to the four elements.§ The dust

* Ἐλθὲ ἡ μήτηρ ἡ εὐσπλαγχνος· ἐλθὲ ἡ οἰκονομία τοῦ ἄρσενος· ἐλθὲ ἡ τὰ μυστήρια ἀποκαλύπτουσα τὰ ἀπόκρυφα. ("Acts of Thomas," 27.)

† Διεχάραξε τῷ ἄρτῳ τὸν σταυρόν. (Ibid., 47.)

‡ Ἡ δύναμις τῆς σωτηρίας ἐλθὲ καὶ σκήνωσον ἐν τοῖς ὕδασι τούτοις, ἵνα τὸ χρίσμα τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος τελείως ἐν αὐτοῖς τελειωθῇ. (Ibid., 49.)

§ "Consummatio Thomæ," 6.

in which his body is laid works great miracles.* This curious writing shows us Gnostic heresy emerging from the clouds of metaphysics, and endeavouring to arrive at a tangible and attractive form for diseased imaginations.

Heresy did not fail to invent revelations, of which it made Adam,† Abraham, or Elijah to be the medium. It also assigned some of its prophetic writings to Zoroaster.‡ The names only of these apocalypses have come down to us. Mention is further made of an Apocalypse of Cerinthus.§ Lastly, we may cite a kind of half Jewish, half Gnostic apocalypse, entitled "The Rapture of Isaiah,"‖ and composed of several parts, of which the dates vary. The oldest portion treats of the vision with which the prophet was honoured in the presence of King Hezekiah. The glory of heaven is suddenly revealed to him; he falls speechless and overwhelmed before the splendours of the Invisible. He traverses the seven heavens which

* "Consummatio Thomæ.," 11.

† Epiphanius, "Hæres.," xxvi. 8, 6; xxxix. 5, 7.

‡ Porphyry, "Vita Plotini," 16. § Eusebius, "H. E.," iii. 28.

‖ The title of this curious apocalypse is Ἀναβατικη ὅρασις Ἡσαίου. It consists of two distinct parts, of which the first (chap. i. to v.) is the least ancient; for the state of the Church therein referred to only existed subsequent to the Council of Nice. It comprehends the narrative of the appearing of Isaiah at the court of Hezekiah, to denounce the impiety of Manasseh, and then records the persecution of which he is the object, and his martyrdom. This fragment is probably based on a Jewish apocryphal writing. The second part, the Latin translation of which was found in Venice by Cardinal Maï, relates the translation of Isaiah into heaven. It clearly shows the influence of Gnosticism. Epiphanius refers to it ("Hæres.," xl. 2). See also Origen ("Homil. i. in Isaiah," 5). The second fragment dates from the third century. The entire work, discovered in Ethiopian, was translated into English, and published by Laurence (1829). See Lucke "Offenbar. des Johann," i. p. 274 and following.

are above the earth. With the exception of the first, which is Hades, and the last, which is the abode of the Most High, they all present the same spectacle. In the centre is a throne, on which an archangel is seated, and on either side the angels stand in pairs, an arrangement which recalls at once the Valentinian Syzygies. In the seventh heaven God dwells with His well-beloved Son and with the Holy Spirit. He gives His Son the command to pass through all the heavens, assuming in each the form of the angel whose abode it is. Finally He is to appear on earth in the form of a man, born of the Virgin Mary, there to perform great miracles, to be rejected and crucified by the Jews, then to return to the seventh heaven, and sit down at the Father's right hand. This vision is evidently strongly tinged with docetism. The Christ does not assume humanity in any more real sense than He has assumed the nature of the angels in His successive metamorphoses. The vision of Isaiah is preceded in the Ethiopian book in which these fragments are preserved, by an account of that which took place at the court of Hezekiah when the prophet announced to the king the shameful fall of his son Manasseh. The pious monarch was only prevented from sacrificing his successor by the intercessions of Isaiah. Nevertheless, Manasseh vowed deadly hatred to the prophet; and on the instigation of the demon whom he obeyed, he caused Isaiah to be seized upon the mountain of Bethlehem, and commanded that he should be put to death for his sinister predictions to Hezekiah of the future of the world and of Manasseh himself. The visions of the prophet contain an entire apocalypse,

which traces the ministry, the death, resurrection, and glorious ascension of Jesus Christ, who is described under the name of the *well-beloved*. The triumphs of the apostolate are described at length; they are to be followed by a period of decadence in the Church; the Holy Spirit will depart, and there will be no more faith in the sacred oracles. The demon will descend from the firmament in the person of Nero, and will receive as antichrist the adoration of the earth, till the *well-beloved* shall descend from the seventh heaven and destroy the empire of Satan. The reign of the just and the last judgment are the conclusion of this vision, which belongs evidently to the fourth century, and does not come therefore within our limits.

§ II. *The Apocrypha not positively heretical.*

Let us give a rapid enumeration of the apocryphal writings which hover between heresy and orthodoxy.

We have, in the first place, a very curious writing, entitled "The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs," which, in spite of its Judæo-Christian character, does not bear any of the marks of heresy.* The sons of Jacob are shown us each on his death-bed, in the prophetic hour when the future unveils itself before the gaze of the dying patriarch. Each of them in turn takes the last farewell of his children. All these discourses have a strong similarity, and pass from moral exhortation to prophecy. These prophetic words all

* "The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs" is found in the Spicilegium" of Grabe, vol. i. p. 145 and following. It dates from the second century. Origen quotes it repeatedly. ("Comment. in Genesis," ad cap. i. v. 14. Huet edition, vol. ii. p. 15.)

have reference to the glorious descendant of the holy race, to whom the world will owe its salvation. His divinity, His oneness with God, are asserted with perfect clearness. He is hailed as the offspring of Judah and Levi, the heir at once of the kingship and the priesthood. "God," it is said, "will raise up the priest in the tribe of Levi, the king in the tribe of Judah. He will be at once God and man; His priesthood will be exercised in all nations, and will be a new priesthood."* The idea of redemption is still very vague in this writing, which confines itself to declaring that the wicked shall be stopped in their impiety, when the righteous shall rest in Christ.† It presents none of the extravagances of the apocryphal literature, though it bears a very decided impress of asceticism. It does not merely forbid incontinence; it enjoins that a man should not touch a woman.‡

It is curious to find in the "Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs" the theocratic idea of the middle ages, expressed in the very same terms employed by such men as Gregory VII. and Innocent III. "The Lord," says Judah, "has given to me the kingdom, and to Levi the priesthood, and He has placed the kingdom in subjection to the priestly power. He has given to me the things of earth, and to him the things of heaven. As the heaven is higher than the earth, so the divine priesthood is higher than the kinghood.§ The "Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs" proclaims the destruc-

* Ποιήσει ἱεράτειαν νέαν. (Grabe, p. 164.)

† Οἱ ἄνομοι καταπαύσουσιν εἰς κακά. Οἱ δὲ δίκαιοι καταπαύσουσιν ἐν αὐτῷ. (Ibid., p. 172.)

‡ Φυλάξαι τὰς αἰσθήσεις ἀπὸ πάσης θηλείας. (Ibid., p. 151.)

§ Ibid., p. 186.

tion of Judaism, and in the end of time the triumphant return of Christ, the universal resurrection, the condemnation of the wicked, and the reign of the saints, that is, of those who have been poor and afflicted in this present life.* Although it draws its inspiration from the book of Enoch, from which it makes many quotations, it is free from the excesses of millenarian materialism.

The two oldest narratives of the Gospel history belonging to the category of the apocrypha, and not tainted with heresy, are the "Protevangel of James"† and the "Acts of Pilate." The latter consists of two distinct parts: the one treats of the scenes in the pretorium, the other describes the descent of Jesus into hell. These two parts do not bear the same date; the first is earlier than the second, though both belong to a remote Christian antiquity. They were subsequently put together under the name of the "Gospel of Nicodemus.‡ The "Protevangel of James" narrates the circumstances which preceded the birth of Mary, the mother of Christ. The narrative is a parody on the birth of John the Baptist. Joachim and Anna, two

* Grabe, p. 188.

† Justin Martyr alludes to the "Protevangel of James" ("Dial. cum Tryph.," c. 78): he has at least borrowed from it the incident of the birth of Jesus in a cavern. Origen (in Matt. vol. x. 17, vol. iii. 462) actually mentions this apocrypha.

‡ The "Acts of Pilate" come before the "Descensus ad inferos." The two writings are always separated in old MSS. The same facts are differently narrated in them. Then the words of the thief upon the cross are not the same in both. (Tischendorf, "Prolegomena," p. 56.) The name of Nicodemus, given to the completion of these two writings, dates from the middle ages. We have two editions of the "Acts of Pilate." The first is the oldest. Justin Martyr quotes from it directly. ("Apol.," i. 35; i. 48. See also Tertullian, "Apol.," 21.)

pious Israelites advanced in years, are made, by the special favour of God, fruitful in their hoar age.* This miracle is the foreshadowing of the high destiny awaiting the child, who is none other than Mary. She grows up like a lily beneath the shadow of the altar, in the midst of young companions pure as herself. She is the favourite of the priests, who watch over her education till the day of her marriage. In order to ascertain to whom she is to be entrusted, the high priest assembles a number of pious Israelites. A white dove springs from the rod of the old carpenter Joseph, who is marked out by this miraculous sign as the chaste guardian of the young virgin.† The annunciation takes place as in the Gospel. The circumstances of the birth of Christ are borrowed from St. Luke, with this difference, that Mary brings forth the divine Child in a cavern and not in a stable. The sole design of the narrative is to give emphasis to the dignity and virginity of Mary. We have in it the first attempt to draw her out of the wise obscurity in which she is enveloped in the canonical Gospels, an attempt characterised by the asceticism which pervades all the sacred legends.

The apocryphal Gospels of the following age, such as the "Pseudo-Matthew;" the "Coptic Gospel of the carpenter Joseph;" the "Arabic Gospel of the Childhood of Mary," and lastly that of the Nativity, enlarge upon those of the earlier period, and exalt more and more the part assigned to the mother of Jesus. We mention them only to show in what direction the Christian legend was tending from its very first essay in the "Protevangel of James."

* "Protevang. Jacobi," c. 6. † Ibid., c. 9.

The "Acts of Pilate" do not bear the stamp of any particular school. The anonymous writers endeavour to make the Jews, Christ's contemporaries, also His apologists. His trial before the Roman proconsul is expanded by the addition of a multitude of details. The sick whom he has healed appear at the bar of the tribunal, and one after another make their depositions in His favour, relating what He has done for them. His resurrection is afterwards established by the testimony of the soldiers placed as a guard around the sepulchre, and further by the witness of Joseph of Arimathea, to whom Christ appeared in the prison into which the Jews had thrown him, and from which he was delivered by miracle. This outline is filled up in a very ingenious manner. It is just possible that some true incidents of the trial of Jesus may have been preserved by tradition, but it is impossible to distinguish with any certainty the true from the false. Nicodemus plays in all these scenes the part of the impartial judge —the character assigned to him in the fourth Gospel. The second part of this curious writing is occupied with the events that took place in the abode of the dead, during Christ's descent into it. This narrative is ascribed to the two sons of the aged Simeon, who came out of their tombs in the train of the risen Redeemer. While hell and its king are confounded and crushed beneath the foot of the Redeemer, the saints of the old covenant hail Him with rapture; each one of them, from Adam to John the Baptist, recognising Him as the long-expected object of their hope. The great prophets repeat in His presence their most sublime oracles, in order to show how in Him all are fulfilled. All the

scenes of the invisible world are described in strains of glowing grandeur, almost Dantesque. The writing closes with a juridical comparison made by Pilate between the sacred writings of the Old Testament and the events which have just taken place at Jerusalem. This is the legal apology; the question of Christianity is debated after the fashion of an ordinary law case.

The legends relating to the apostles have obtained no less credit in the Church than those bearing on the life of Jesus. The "Acts of Peter and Paul" must have been written shortly after the "Clementines," for their object is to bring into prominence the radical agreement between the two apostles, and their common opposition to Simon Magus. Thus are exposed the false inventions by which St. Paul had been identified with Simon, and both sacrificed to Peter, for the honour and glory of Essenian Judæo-Christianity.* Peter is said to have preceded Paul to Rome. The latter was on his way to the capital of the empire. There he arrived, in spite of the prohibition which Nero had issued in consequence of the intrigues of the Jews, who had found an auxiliary in Simon Magus. The father of heresy undertakes to confound the disciples of Christ by his sorceries, and to demonstrate that he is the very Son of God, the incarnation of truth. An imposing spectacle is prepared. The magician causes a funeral pile to be raised, from the top of which he promises to rise into the arms of the angels. The emperor, who devoutly preaches brotherly love to the apostles and Simon, presides on the occasion. It ends in the con-

* The "Acts of Peter and Paul" are quoted in Eusebius, "H.E.," iii. 3.

fusion of the impostor, who, by the aid of demons, does indeed rise at first into the air, but is speedily precipitated to the earth at the word of Peter. Religious truth is thus staked upon an idle prodigy. Everything hinges on the marvellous; he who can do the boldest stroke is vindicated against his adversaries. The "Acts of Peter and Paul" mark out Peter as the first of the apostles.* The bread of the Eucharist is represented in this work as possessing magical virtue, for it is merely shown to the furious dogs let loose upon Peter by Simon, and they are instantly tamed.† The writing concludes with the martyrdom of Paul and of Peter. It contains in its original form the beautiful legend of the *quo vadis*, which we have already quoted in a previous volume.

The "Acts of Paul and Thekla" date from the second century.‡ This is the romance of asceticism. The apostle in the course of his missionary travels arrives in Iconia, accompanied by Demas, who is already playing the part of a traitor. Paul's appearance is minutely described. He is low in stature, bald, and bent: sadness is the prevailing expression of his features, though they are also full of a heavenly sweetness.§ Like Thomas in India, he preaches asceticism. "Happy," says he, "are they who have kept their body undefiled." His gospel is called the gospel of virginity.‖ He makes Thekla, the daughter of his hosts, a

* Ἀδελφὲ Πέτρου τοῦ πρώτου τῶν ἀποστόλων. ("Acts of Peter and Paul," c. 5.)

† Ibid., c. 48.

‡ The "Acts of Paul and Thekla" are quoted by Tertullian ("De baptismo," 17). See St. Jerome, "De script. eccles.," c. 7.

§ Ibid., c. 2.

‖ Μακάριοι οἱ ἁγνὴν τὴν σάρκα τηρήραντες. (Ibid., c. 5.) Τὸν τῆς παρθενίας λόγον. (Ibid., 7.)

convert to his views. Dragged before the magistrates by the father of the young Christian, he openly avows his doctrine, and assigns a far more important place to asceticism than to redemption in the work of Jesus Christ. Compelled to evade punishment by a hasty flight, he is soon joined in his retreat by Thekla, who follows him "as a lamb follows the shepherd."* The young girl is herself brought before the judges. Condemned to be burned, the flames refuse to touch her. Paul consents to baptise her. Again menaced at Antioch, she finds shelter with a woman of the city, who has seen in a dream the soul of her daughter appearing to her, and asking her to protect the Christian virgin, who, by her prayers, will bring her to heaven.† Thus, according to this legend, the intercession of saints opens the gates of Paradise. Thekla has other adventures no less marvellous. The fierce beasts to whom she has been thrown come and lick her feet in the circus; and at Seleucia, where she lives as an anchorite, a rock opens to hide her from the brutal attacks of licentious pagans. Thekla is the anticipated glorification of conventual virginity.

The "Acts of Andrew" found much favour with the heretics,‡ though they did not, any more than those of which we have been speaking, owe their authorship to them. They narrate the missions of the Apostle Andrew in the proconsulate of Achaia, and his appearing before the pagan tribunal. Christianity assumes, under

* Ὡς ἀμνὸς ἐν ἐρήμῳ τὸν ποιμένα. (The "Acts of Paul and Thekla," 21.)

† Ἵνα εὔξηται περὶ ἐμοῦ καὶ μετατεθῶ εἰς τὸν τῶν δικαίων τόπον. (Ibid., 28.)

‡ Eusebius, "H. E.," iii. 25; Epiphanius, "Hæres," xlvii. 1.

his presentation of it, a purely material guise. He makes the cross of Calvary the material opposite to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and is thus led to speak of the cross in terms of the most abject superstition.* When the apostle himself is crucified, he addresses the instrument of his torture in the language of ecstasy. "I hail thee, O cross!" he exclaims, "thee whom the body of Christ has consecrated, and whom His limbs adorned like precious jewels! I come to thee without fear, that thou mayest receive me with joy, me, the disciple of the Crucified. O blessed cross, on whom the wounded body of the Lord has set such beauty, I have ardently desired and earnestly sought thee. Receive me out of the throng of men, and present me to thy Master, so that through thee, He who has purified may take me to Himself!"† The sacrament of the Lord's Supper is also represented in such a manner as to foster the growth of all later superstitions. "Every day," says Andrew, "I offer a sacrifice, but no more with the smoke of incense and the blood of slain bulls or goats. No. I offer day by day the spotless Lamb upon the altar of the cross. His body is truly eaten and His blood truly drunk by His people."‡ Andrew dies, like Stephen, in a holy ecstasy. His ashes are carefully gathered up, while the proconsul who has condemned him to death is cast down from the top of a rock.

The "Acts of St. John" bear probably the same date as those of Andrew.§ They place before us the

* "Acts of Andrew," chap. v. † Ibid., chap. x.

‡ Ἄμωμον ἀμνὸν καθ' ἑκάστην ἡμέραν ἐν τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ τοῦ σταυροῦ ἱεουργῶν, ἀληθῶς τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ παρὰ τοῦ λαοῦ βιβρώσκεται καὶ τὸ αἷμα αὐτοῦ ὁμοίως πίνεται. (Ibid., chap. vi.)

§ Eusebius, "H.E.," iii. 25; Epiphanius, "Hæres.," xlvii. 1.

Emperor Domitian, who, on the denunciation of the Jews, opens the fire of persecution upon the Christians Having heard that John proclaimed the end of the Roman empire and the inauguration of a new reign he sought him out at Ephesus. His inquiries only elicited a repetition of his prophecies as to the coming of the Saviour. To accredit his oracles, the apostle drinks a cup of mortal poison and feels no ill effects: a like potion kills, before the eyes of the emperor, another unhappy man, whom John at once restores to life. John is banished to Patmos, whence he returns to Ephesus before his death, and commits the charge of his church to Polycarp. The divinity of Christ occupies a large place in his last discourses. Asceticism is also highly exalted. The dying apostle lays himself down in his tomb, from which there springs a fountain of living water, the faithful figure of the immortal youth of his teaching.* We may cite, last of all, the "Acts of Thaddeus," which bear a strong Jewish impress. They contain the letter in which Abgar, King of Edessa, asks Jesus to cure him of a mortal malady. Eusebius gives, in his history, a similar letter, with the supposed reply of Jesus Christ.† The tradition which forms the basis of the "Acts of Thaddeus" is therefore very ancient, and indicates the desire felt by the Christians to have a document written by the hand of Jesus. The legendary story

* "Acts of John," chap. xxii. The other apocryphal "Acts," published by Tischendorf, do not belong to the period before us. Neither the "Acts of Barnabas" nor those of Philip are mentioned by Eusebius. The "Acts of Bartholomew" are also of a later date. The mythical and melodramatic element acquires a growing ascendency.

† Eusebius, "H. E.," i. 13.

of the healing of Abgar, by means of the image of Christ impressed upon the handkerchief with which he wiped the drops from his brow, belongs to a much later date. The pretended missions of Thaddeus to Edessa and into Mesopotamia, as also the fable of the first appearing of Jesus Christ to his mother, supposed to be antecedent to all the rest, are inventions of a still more modern date.

Several apocryphal epistles came into circulation in the course of the second century, among others, an epistle to the Laodiceans, and a correspondence between St. Paul and Seneca; but they do not present any doctrinal speciality. The apocryphal apocalypses have been recently published.* Two of these are of high Christian antiquity, though their precise date cannot be determined. The "Apocalypse of Moses" is a mythical narrative of the sickness and death of Adam and Eve, who are called the *protoplasts*.† This writing is of importance, on account of its exaltation of the dignity and grandeur of the primitive man, made in the likeness of God. Adam appears as the king of creation—a fallen king indeed, but great even in his decadence, and destined to be restored to his high dignity. The whole narrative is full of sublime poetry. The character of Eve appears as the ideal

* Tischendorf has published a collection of the apocryphal apocalypses, under the title, "Apocalypses Apocryphæ." Leipzig, 1866.

† The "Apocalypse of Moses" is probably only a fragment of a larger work. This fragment may date from the second century, for it contains the legend of Seth going to seek in Paradise the oil of consolation for his dying father. Allusion is made to this legend in the part of the Gospel of Nicodemus which is called "Descensus ad inferos." It seems that we have, in the "Apocalypse of Moses," the first foundation of this legend.

of womanhood. When Adam is attacked with his last sickness, Eve exclaims, "O my lord, Adam, give me the half of thy pain, that I may bear it with thee, for it is for my fault thou art thus smitten! It is I who have brought on thee this sorrow and anguish!"* As he is dying, Eve says to him, "Wherefore diest thou, while I live?"† "Be not troubled at this," Adam replies; "thou shalt soon follow me; we shall die both in one day." Does not this description bring before us the Adam and Eve of Milton's poem, treading together the path of exile with bitter tears and hands clasped in each other's? Eve tells her children how she was led to fall in her great ordeal. She concludes the story with some noble words, full of the mingled regrets, high aspirations, and poetic feelings of the human heart, upon the threshold of Eden, at the moment of quitting the abode of glory and purity. Adam turns to the seraphim and says: "Suffer me to carry away with me the perfume of Paradise."‡ God suffers it, and he receives that pure aroma of Eden which is to be the incense of the sacrifices, and to represent the whole ideal and celestial aspect of his life. The chief episode in the "Apocalypse of Moses" is the mission given by Adam to his son Seth, to go and seek the oil of consolation, which flows from the tree of life in Paradise. This favour is refused him, because he is to die; but scarcely has he breathed his last, when his soul is carried away by angels, and his body borne into Eden, there to await the resurrection

* *Δός μοι τὸ ἥμισυ τῆς νόσου σου*: ("Apocalypse of Moses," chap. 9.)

† *Διὰ τί σὺ ἀποθνήσκεις κἀγώ.* (Ibid., chap. 31.)

‡ *Δέομαι ὑμῶν, ἄφετέ με ἆραι εὐωδίας ἐκ τοῦ παραδείσου.* (Ibid., chap. 29.)

day. The death of him who was created for eternal life, and was not to die, produces a deep tremor of awe throughout the universe. The earth refuses to bear the body of its king; the sun and moon cover themselves with a veil, and mourn over him till he has been laid in the glorious sepulchre prepared for him and for the first woman.* The "Apocalypse of Moses" contains one of the most beautiful legends of Christian antiquity. We place in the same category a very curious writing, composed of various fragments, entitled the "Apocalypse of Adam,"† or, the "Testament of our father Adam." The first fragment, in which we can trace the influence of Persian thought, represents to us the adoration of various orders of beings in the different hours of the night. The first hour is the time of the adoration of the demons, who cease to do evil; the second belongs to the fishes and reptiles; the third to the lower depths; the fourth to the seraphim. "Before my sin," says Adam, "I used to hear the sound of their wings in Paradise." At five o'clock it is the hour of the sea. "The great waves are heard lifting up their voices to bless God." At six o'clock the clouds are gathered together: this is a moment of religious awe. At seven all the powers of the earth rest. If at this instant water is taken, and holy oil poured into it, the sick are instantly cured by being anointed with this mixture. At eight o'clock the earth, which receives the dew from heaven and

* "Apocalypse of Moses," chap. xxxv.

† In the "Asiatic Journal," 3rd series, vol. ii. p. 427 and following, is a translation of the "Apocalypse of Adam," by M. Renan. It is made from the Syriac MSS. of the Vatican and of Paris. This writing is identical with the fragment entitled, "Pœnitentiæ Adæ," condemned by the decree of Gelasius.

sees the grass grow on its bosom, breaks forth into praises. Lastly, we have the adoration of men. The doors of heaven open to allow their prayers to pass: these are humbly presented, and bring down all that they seek. When the sun rises, the earth trembles with solemn joy; all beings keep silence till the incense of adoration has ascended to heaven; then the powers separate. The order of prayer during the hours of the day resembles that of the night. Let us cite the following remarkable words: "The Holy Spirit descends and moves upon the waters and the springs. If the Spirit of the Lord did not descend and hover thus over the waters and the fountains, the race of man would be lost, and the demons would destroy with a glance whom they would." We see how the material notion of the sacrament was already forming itself on the obscure basis of these legends.

A third fragment contains the prediction of the Christ given to Adam after the Fall. It is repeated by the patriarch to his son Seth. We here meet with this remarkable passage: "Fear nothing, thou hast desired to be God, I will make thee God. Having created thee in mine own image, I will not suffer thee to remain in *Shehol*. After three days passed in the tomb, I will resume the body of thy race which I have taken upon me; then ascending to heaven, I will make thee sit down at the right hand of my Godhead." The testament concludes with this declaration of Seth: "I, Seth, have written this testament after the death of my father Adam. We buried him—my brother and I—at the east side of Paradise. And the angels and the powers of the heavens assisted at his funeral, because

he had been created in the image of God. We buried by him, in the same cave, called the Cave of Treasures, his testament, and the incense and myrrh from Paradise. To this spot the magi came to seek the perfumes which they brought to the child Jesus." This singular writing, which contains, as will be seen, great beauties, closes with a classification of the orders and powers, made wholly on the model of the Avesta.

We may mention yet further the book of John on the "Death of Mary," which forms part of the apocalypses recently published, and which is dedicated to the glorification of the mother of the Saviour. All the apostles are mysteriously assembled from the various countries where they are carrying on their mission, in order to be present at the death of Mary. They celebrate her praises in terms which, doubtless, did not form part of the original text, but are later additions and interpolations. Mary becomes a sort of mediator between men and her Son. The instant she has breathed her last her body is carried away by angels: this is, even at this early date, spoken of as her assumption. Although the precise time of this writing is not certain, it is impossible to suppose that in its present form it goes further back than the third century.* We find in it the full de-

* The date of the writing called "De Dormitione Mariæ" (to which must be appended "Transitus Mariæ A., Transitus Mariæ B.) is difficult to fix. It is certain that the legends which it contains arose in the first century of the Christian era, since they are reproduced by Gregory of Tours (Beda venerabilis, "Retract in Act. app." c. vii.). The decree of Gelasius condemned this apocrypha. With reference to the other apocalypses, edited by Tischendorf, we may say that of Paul belongs to the time of Theodosius, and that of John is not mentioned till the ninth century. The "Apocalyypse of Esdras" is uncertain in date, and of no importance as regards Christian doctrine. See Tischendorf's "Prolegomena."

velopment and efflorescence of a tradition which was formed only by slow degrees, and the precise starting-point of which cannot be known. We may place in the class of apocalyptic literature the so-called book of Hystaspis, the old Median king, who is mentioned by Justin Martyr, and who proclaims the destruction of the world by fire;* also the "Apocalypse of Peter," who foretels the terrible judgments of the future in strange terms.† The milk of women coagulating, will form worms which will devour their bosom, and flames will dart from the eyes of their children to consume them. The Christians thus imitated the Jews in introducing interpolations into the Sibylline oracles.‡ Some of these interpolations are of very early date. The first forms part of Book IV. The Sibyl, after proclaiming herself the priestess of the Most High God, who desires not temples of stone, describes in vivid colours the fearful persecutions inflicted on the pious. The day of punishment draws near. Nero, the antichrist, has retired into Asia, deeply stained with innocent blood. He intends to return after the destruction of the temple by Titus, and to unchain all the fury of antichrist. But terrible signs announce the last judgment: the earth will be shaken and Vesuvius will vomit fire. Nero will be destroyed, and from the ashes of the now existing world will come forth a new earth, in

* Καὶ Σίβυλλα δὲ καὶ Ὑστάσπις γενήσεσθαι τῶν φθαρτῶν ἀνάλωσιν διὰ πυρὸς ἔφασαν. (Justin Martyr, "Apol.," i. 20.)

† Eusebius, "H.E.," iii. 25. Clement of Alexandria knew the "Apocalypse of Peter," as given by Eusebius, "H.E.," vi. 14. Grabe, "Spicileg.," i. 74.

‡ "Oracula Sibyllina," edit. Alexandria, 1869. See remarks in the "Life, Times, and Works of Jesus Christ," in the Sibylline books, and in particular on the Jewish interpolations.

which the righteous—that is, those who have been baptised in time—shall reign.* The second oracle, with which Book V. opens, is more Judaising in tone. It proclaims the same judgments, and connects them also with the return of Nero. It is of Alexandrine origin, for it speaks chiefly of the judgment of Egypt.† The visions of the millenarians thus gained currency, and borrowed their ardent hues from the ancient apocalypses of the Jews.

We have endeavoured to give a complete idea of that apocryphal literature which exerted in the end so great an influence upon the development of Christian thought, diffusing itself throughout the whole intellectual atmosphere. We have now before us the data for more than mere hypothetical inferences as to the progress of that oral tradition of which this literature was sometimes the inspiration, sometimes the echo. And first of all we recognise that imperious desire of the popular imagination to clothe religious ideas in a living and visible form—that mythological instinct which rapidly transfigures facts, and fills up all the interstices of history, as the moss creeps with its tufted crests into the crevices of a wall. Thus, if there is a period in the history of Jesus, upon which the canonical Gospels have kept a guarded silence, it is that of His childhood; and it is this very period which the legend has mainly sought to transfigure. A scarcely perceptible basis of actual fact suffices as its starting point. That which is brought out most prominently by all this apocryphal literature, is the tendency to merge more and more the distinctively spiritual character of Christianity, and to

* Book iv. † Book v. 1.

transform it into a religion of outward authority, resting solely upon prodigies and issuing in a narrow morality. The doctrine of redemption is either absent, or distorted in the gra'ual growth of tradition. Nowhere is the sacrifice of Christ presented in its moral virtue, as reconciling the world to God, and imparting a new life to the pardoned soul. Justification by faith has no place in any of these lucubrations of current and popular dogmatism. External performances are the great essential. The heavenly abode is built by every man for himself, by his self-mortification and alms-givings. Thus does the spirit of Judaism insinuate itself into the souls of the Christians. The person of the Redeemer is no less changed than His work. All the human and progressive side of his earthly career, all that shows the reality of His self-abasement, is suppressed. He is made to work miracles without number, from His very cradle; and then is originated that dry and lifeless metaphysical theory which puts in the place of the Christ of the Gospels the Byzantine Christ, as He is defined by the council of Chalcedony. The Christian life is no less shorn of the characters of normal humanity; the fantastic perfection of asceticism is substituted for the simple and manly performance of duty; and the descent is thus begun to the Romish counsels of perfection and the deterioration of sound morality. While the fathers of Alexandria are inaugurating with brilliant powers the great Christian apology which bases our certainty in matters of religion on the harmony of the Gospel with the conscience, the ignorant masses choose a shorter way, and a less elevated demonstration, that namely of the Jews, of

whom Paul speaks—"They seek after a sign." Hence comes that prodigality of miracles of which we have spoken, and which were designed to establish the divine origin of the new religion. The same tendency led to the attempt to multiply apostolic documents. Exaggerating beyond measure the value of the written title, if we may so express it, they forgot the spirit in the letter, and were far less concerned to base their belief upon a rational interpretation of the canonical Scriptures, than to add to their number. When the name of an apostle had been attached to any doctrine whatsoever, even were it in flagrant opposition to the New Testament, they considered the point established beyond appeal. Such at least was the vulgar opinion. Hence false teachers were under strong temptation to put in circulation a host of apocryphal scriptures. They would not have done so if such endeavours had been rendered futile by a true conception of Christian authority, which would have attached importance to the general scope of the revelation, rather than to isolated texts, or the invocation of some honoured name. When once the production of an apostolic signature is accepted as decisive, there is every inducement to fabricate false documents. Absolutely false, moreover, they are not. There is always a larger or less nucleus of truth in the tradition. An insignificant fact, a word misconstrued, will suffice to originate an entire new growth of legends, and inventions are placed without scruple under the same sacred shelter of an apostolic name. It was by the same influences that the materialistic notion of sacramental virtue was formed and fostered. More and more importance came to be attached to the outward

rite; baptism became identified with the pagan lustrations; and language was used in reference to the Lord's Supper which gave authority to every superstition. Finally, men began to people this sort of Christian Olympus, in which the creature would soon find a niche for self-worship, and the Virgin-mother was already placed on its highest summit, the first step in an apotheosis not yet complete. Such is beyond question the direction of this current of oral tradition, which for the time runs parallel with the public teaching of the Church, and accommodates itself to the tendencies of the ignorant classes, while the great theology of Alexandria is established upon the somewhat cloudy heights of speculation. Oral tradition is a sort of obscure universal suffrage, which will in the end make its will paramount, and gain the sanction of the official authorities.

BOOK SECOND.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE IN THE SECOND AND THIRD CENTURIES.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS.

§ I. *The Universal Faith of the Church in the Second and Third Centuries.*

CHRISTIAN theology finds in this period of intense piety and incessant conflict its fullest and most various development. We observe great schools, not opposed to one another, but differing widely, and all treating with perfect freedom the fundamental statements of the Gospel. There is no central power; the synods are accidental and quite subordinate assemblies. The more the State manifests its intolerance, the more firmly does the Church maintain its moral independence. For ever at issue with brute force, it cannot accept its complicity even in the proscription of error. The picture we shall draw of the development of Christian thought at this time will make very evident the vigour and freedom of its methods. It

remained nevertheless profoundly and stedfastly Christian, and in willing subjection to the general tenor of apostolic teaching. Theological speculation never impaired, if I may so speak, the rock of fundamental truths; it ever respected the corner-stone of the building. It often encompassed it, no doubt, with daring and darkening conceits, but the same substantial reality of the faith underlay them all. This is explained by the fact that the faith of the Church was not at the mercy of the speculations and possible errors of religious science. It was the inalienable possession of the Christian heart, guaranteed by experience, and it constituted a living and indestructible bond between all the Churches. Thus the much controverted distinction between the fundamental and secondary points of faith sprang up of itself from the unfailing instinct of piety.

Fully assured that the treasure of sacred truth, that which the apostles called "the faith once delivered to the saints," could not be lost, the Church granted all latitude to the researches of theology, so long as this did not, as in the case of Gnosticism, compromise Christian theism. An earnest contending for essential points coincided with a generous breadth in minor matters. Men did not imagine in those days that all was compromised by the slightest divergence in the conception of the same fact, accepted alike by both sides. The calm assurance of faith banished the senseless terrors which lead to constant reactions; for there is no surer way of bringing bondage upon the mind than the fear of inquiry, which betrays doubt rather than strength of conviction. Serious and well-

founded beliefs are tolerant just because they are not afraid of being shipwrecked in the first storm. The more deeply religious they are, the more directly they rest upon the inner life of the soul, the more they respect the rights of thought, and avoid infringing upon its domain. On the other hand, the dry scholasticism which transforms Christianity into a mere intellectual system, keeps a jealous watch over every link in its chain of deductions. The doctrinal formula being in its view the essential, the slightest deviation wounds it to the heart, or, to speak more correctly, touches it on its most sensitive point.

Let us embrace, in a rapid glance, that which constituted the faith of the Church in the second and third centuries. I do not think that in an age of earnest resistance to Gnosticism the Christian faith would have been designated by the name of orthodoxy, for this word would have seemed to favour a purely scientific notion of religion. Christians were then specially anxious that religion should not be regarded as consisting in a correct opinion with regard to God. Religion was to them essentially a moral and living principle, without, however, as we shall show, being on that account vague and uncertain. We shall confine ourselves here to a slight outline of the facts, and to a few broad indications, for the demonstration, properly so called, will be amply contained in the picture we shall presently give of the worship of the Church, and of the Christian life.

The Christian faith at this time, as always, has for its great object Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. The whole of Christianity

centres in His person. How could it be otherwise, since He is the Mediator between earth and heaven, the One who has restored the broken link between humanity and God? Is not this link the essential condition of this sacred relation between man and his Creator which is called religion? Jesus Christ is not regarded simply as the initiator of a new worship, or a perfect model of religion. No. He is the very object of the religion He has founded; He is the centre and source of life and piety. Nothing can be further removed from the universal sentiment of the Church than Unitarian notions. If, as we shall see, theology, even when animated by an evangelical spirit, does not find sufficient and always correct explanation of this adoration of Christ, the fact nevertheless remains, and its catholicity cannot be impugned. In order to be convinced of this, we need only remember the part which faith in Jesus fills in the roll of martyrdom. The Christian who is cast into prison, and brought before the tribunal of the proconsul, thence to be taken to the stake, or led into the arena, endures all this hardness and suffering for the Redeemer's sake. It is with that name upon his lips he stands unabashed before his judges, and does not flinch in view of his executioners. He is ready, as said the young martyr girl of Lyons, to "follow the Lamb whithersoever He leadeth." Any one familiar with the story of the long and bloody contest between imperial Rome and the Church, will be fully assured that every confessor had the deep conviction that he belonged—body, soul, and spirit—to his Divine Master; that Christ had a supreme

right over his life, over his most cherished affections, over his entire being. Martyrdom is in itself a confession of faith—the powerful proclamation of the duty of leaving all for Jesus, and it is at His feet the martyr's palms are cast adoringly. The motto of Ignatius is that of every confessor: "All I lay down, may I but win Christ!"* To share His cup is the highest happiness.† If the dungeon becomes luminous it is when the Christian in raptured vision sees the bright form of the Crucified One rising over the shadow that surrounds him. We have already shown how his ardent, unquestioning faith in Christ, which implies that He is all in all to the soul, lives again in the expressive symbols traced with sublime simplicity upon the gloomy walls of the catacombs. Here we find the confession of faith of the persecuted Church drawn by trembling hands amidst the lurid flashes of the stake. While the perpetually recurring image of the Good Shepherd, bearing home on His shoulders the lost sheep, points to the redeeming love which is the central fact of the Gospel, the presence of the Son of God in the furnace seven times heated records that which was the highest consolation, the triumphant joy of the confessors of the new covenant. Numberless inscriptions, accompanied with speaking symbols, give praise to Christ for the peace of those whose dust has been piously laid beside the ashes of the martyrs. The monogram of His name, the fish, the anchor beneath the cross, traced in hurried and mysterious outline, fill with the memory of Christ this sleeping-

* Ignatius, "Epist. ad Roman.," 4.
† "Acta martyr. Polyc.," c. 14.

place of the dead. Lastly, the child Jesus in the arms of His mother, is often held forth to the eyes of the worshipper.*

The manifestation of faith, when it is involuntary and blends with the life of every day, carries with it a peculiar strength of conviction. Now it is certain that the whole life of the Christian is linked with the thought and memory of the Redeemer; it bears His image stamped upon it. The first day of the week, the observance of which was freely substituted for the Sabbath, to meet the necessities of worship as well as those of individual piety, bears His name; Sunday is the Lord's day, the perpetual memorial of His resurrection.† Wednesday and Friday soon came to be set apart by the Church in special remembrance of His humiliation and death: these were called stations. A similar change passed upon the year. The great Jewish feasts, all commemorative of mighty miracles wrought by Jehovah for His people, were replaced by the Christian festivals, the original cycle of which consisted of the anniversary of the birth of Christ, Easter, and Pentecost.‡ So much importance was attached to these, that one of the most serious controversies between the Christian East and West hinges on the determination of the time at which Easter should be celebrated. The "Apostolical Constitutions" go farther still; they divide the day, like the week and the year, into sacred periods, each hour on the dial marked by

* We shall have to speak again more in detail on this subject in the last volume, which will treat in part of worship and the Christian life.

† "Epist. ad Barnab.," c. 15; Justin Martyr, "Apol.," i. 67.

‡ Gieseler, "Kirchen-Geschichte," vol. i. c. ii. s. 53; c. iv. s. 70.

some holy memory.* We simply mention here these practices of the ancient Church, the complete description of which will come in due course. We draw from this only one inference, namely, that the adoration of Christ is the basis of the general life of the Church, and sets its seal upon the whole.

This is no less manifest in the worship of the Christians, if for one moment we turn our attention to this in its more general aspect. Where shall we find a clearer confession of faith than in the two great sacraments of the Church. Baptism is the enrolment in the sacred militia; it takes the place of circumcision, and incorporates the convert with the people of God, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Sometimes even the baptismal formula contains the name of Christ alone, so intimately is that associated with the two other names. The double act of baptism, the burying beneath the water, and the rising again into the light, points to the death and resurrection of the Redeemer: thus its very administration contains a full confession of the entire Gospel. The communion, celebrated as the great Christian mystery, is the Holy of Holies of the worship. All the fragments of liturgies that have come down to us are found to be full of the acknowledgment of redemption by the blood of the cross, and of adoration of the atoning Victim. It is not possible even for the boldest systematisers to derive any other teaching from the table of the eucharist, or to deprive this rite of its mystical character. "This meal," says Justin, "is called the eucharist, because it is not per-

* "Constit. Eccl. Ægypt.," canon 62. In the "Analecta Antenicæna of Bunsen," vol. ii. p. 473.

mitted to any to partake of it except those who believe in that which is taught by us, and who have received baptism for the remission of sins and the new birth." * The prayers and hymns, which occupy a large place in the worship, and which we find in the liturgical documents, pour out in swelling floods their strains of adoration for the Saviour-God, retracing, with all the fervour of the lyric muse, the work of redemption in its leading features. I will quote only one fragment from the Alexandrine liturgy: "We thank Thee, O Lord, by Thy well-beloved Son Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent in these last days to be our Saviour and Redeemer. He is the Word who comes from Thee, and by whom Thou hast made all things. He was made flesh, and declared to be Thy Son by the Holy Ghost." The doxology runs thus: "Grant us Thy Holy Spirit for the confirmation of our faith in the truth, that Thy saints may praise and magnify Thee in Thy Son Jesus Christ, in whom Thou hast the glory and the power in Thy holy Church, world without end. Amen." The prayer concludes with these words: "In the name of Thine only Son, in whom to Thee, with Him and the Holy Spirit, be honour and power for ever." Elsewhere in this same liturgy the invocation is openly addressed to Jesus Christ. "We praise Thee, we adore Thee, O God, the King of heaven, Almighty Father. O Lord, the only Son, Jesus Christ, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, have pity on us, receive our prayer."

Even the adversaries of the Church bear testimony to its faith, as in the famous passage of Pliny's letter

* Ἧς οὐδενὶ ἄλλῳ μετασχεῖν ἐξόν ἐστιν, ἢ τῷ πιστεύοντι. (Justin, "Apol.," ii. 97.) See "The Liturgy of the Church of Alexandria;" Bunsen, "Analecta Antenicæna," vol. iii. p. 101.

on the hymns which Christians address to Christ as their God. We call to mind, moreover, the attacks of the Jew Trypho, and of the pagan philosopher Celsus, directed against the idea that the Nazarene was the Son of the Most High God, and more especially against the incarnation.* Besides this implied confession of the faith of the Church, which is more decisive than any other, we have formal and exact testimony given again and again as to the beliefs common to all Christians. We have not to inquire here what were the influences which helped to originate the idea of a rule of faith more or less obligatory. This would be to enter prematurely into the question of the dogmatic development of the idea of authority, a question which is determined by the whole character of the Christian thought of the age. But apart from this special and delicate point of inquiry, the declarations of the Fathers suffice to show, with no ambiguity, what constituted the universal faith of Christendom in the second and third centuries. Justin Martyr gives us a very clear epitome of that which the Church of his day recognised as the fulfilment of the prophecies. "The holy oracles," he says, "declare Him, who, born of a virgin, was, on attaining to man's estate, to heal all manner of sickness and disease, and to raise the dead; then alike hated and misunderstood, to be crucified, to die, rise again, and return into heaven. This is our Jesus Christ, who is called the Son of God, as in reality He is."† The following passage from Irenæus is still more explicit as to the faith common to all the Churches:

* Pliny, "Epist." lib. x. ep. 46. Justin, "Dial. cum. Tryph.," p. 250 (Paris edition). Origen, "Contra Celsus," iv. 3, and following. "Opera," i. 503-506. † Justin, "Apol.," ii. p. 73.

"The apostles and their disciples transmitted to the Church, which is spread abroad over the whole earth, the faith in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and all things that are therein; and in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, incarnate for our salvation; and in the Holy Ghost, who by the prophets foretold the divine dispensation, the coming of the Son, His passion and resurrection from the dead, His ascension in His body into heaven, and His second coming from heaven, from the glory of the Father, to restore all things, to raise all the dead, and to make every knee, both in heaven and in earth, bow before Jesus Christ, our Lord, our God, our Saviour, and our King, according to the good pleasure of the invisible Father; and to make every tongue confess Him, all lips pay Him homage, and that He should reign in righteousness and sit in judgment upon all flesh. He will condemn to eternal fire the perverse spirits, rebellious angels, and apostates, as also the impious, the unjust, the disobedient, and blasphemous among men. But for the just and the saints, for those who shall have kept His commandments and continued in His love, whether from the first or after their repentance, for them He has prepared immortality and eternal glory."* Such is the faith of the latter half of the second century.

Let us hear the testimony of Tertullian, at the commencement of the third century. He gives us three summaries of the common faith. We quote the shortest and most exact. "There is one only rule of faith. It consists in believing in one God, the Almighty Creator

* Τοῦτο τὸ κήρυγμα καὶ ταύτην τὴν πίστιν ἡ ἐκκλησία καιπὲρ ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ διεσπαρμένη ἐπιμελῶς φυλάσσει. (Irenæus, "Hæres.," i. 3.)

of the world, and in His Son Jesus Christ, born of the virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate, raised from the dead the third day, received up into heaven, and now sitting at the right hand of God, whence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead by the resurrection of the body."* Hear again Origen. "This is the substance of all that has come down to us by the preaching of the apostles. First, there is one God, the Former and Creator of all things, who made all that exists out of nothing; the God of all the righteous from the creation and formation of the world, the God of Adam, of Abel, of Seth, of Enoch, of Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, of the twelve patriarchs, of Moses and the prophets. This God, as He has foretold by the prophets, hath sent forth in these last times our Lord Jesus Christ, to call Israel first to Himself, and then the Gentiles, after the faithlessness of the children of Israel. This just and good God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He gave the law, the prophets, and the gospels. He is the God of the apostles; the God of the Old and New Testaments. Jesus Christ, who came into the world, was born of the Father before every creature. After working with His Father in the creation of the universe (for all things were made by Him), in these last times He humbled Himself and became incarnate, and was made man; He who was God, and who still remained God, even

* "Regula fidei una omnino est sola immobilis et irreformabilis, credendi scilicet in unicum Deum omnipotentem mundi creatorem, et filium ejus Jesum Christum, natum ex virgine Maria, crucifixum sub Pontio Pilato, tertia die resuscitatum a mortuis, receptum in cœlis, sedentem nunc ad dexteram Patris, venturum judicare vivos et mortuos per carnis etiam resurrectionem." (Tertullian, "De virg. vel." chap. i.)

in taking upon Him human nature. He assumed a body like our own, differing only that He was born of a virgin and of the Holy Spirit. The birth and the suffering of this Jesus were both actual facts. He did not pass through a mere semblance of our common death; He really died, and truly rose again from the dead, and held intercourse with His disciples after His resurrection. According to this same apostolic tradition, the Holy Spirit is joined in honour and dignity with the Father and the Son."*

At that period the catechumens of Alexandria were taught to express their faith in these terms: "I believe in the one true God, the Father Almighty, and in His only Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit who gives life."† This was the first development of the simple baptismal formula which had so long satisfied the Church. At the close of the third century this simple profession of faith had become much overlaid, as may be seen from the creed contained in the seventh book of the "Apostolical Constitutions," which belongs to this period. It is thus expressed: "I pledge myself to Christ, and I am baptised in the faith of the One Supreme Uncreated God, in Jesus Christ, by whom the universe was created and formed, and from whom all things proceed. I believe in the Lord Jesus, His only Son, the first-born

* Origen, "De princip.," i.; "Præfatio," 4.

† Πιστεύω εἰς τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν θεὸν, θεὸν τὸν πατέρα τὸν παντοκράτορα, καὶ εἰς τὸν μονογενῆ αὐτοῦ υἱὸν Ἰησοῦν χριστὸν τὸν κύριον καὶ σωτῆρα ἡμῶν, καὶ εἰς τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα τὸ ζωοποιοῦν. "Constit. Eccl. Ægypt.," ii. 46. (Bunsen, "Antenicæna," iii. 91.) The words which follow, ὁμοούσιον τριάδα, are an interpolation of the fourth century. The third century as yet rejected the expression ὁμοούσιος, as is proved by the condemnation of Paul of Samosata.

of all creation, begotten before the ages by the good pleasure of the Father, not created, by whom all things in heaven and earth were made, visible and invisible. In the last times He descended from heaven and took upon Him our flesh. He was born of the virgin Mary. He lived holily and blamelessly in the world, walking in all the commandments of His God and Father. He was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He died for us, and after His passion He was raised again for us the third day, and ascended into heaven, where He is set down at the right hand of the Father. Thence He will come again with glory in the fulness of time to judge the quick and the dead, and His kingdom will have no end. I am baptised into the Holy Spirit, who is the Paraclete, who has been working from the beginning of the world in all the saints, who was then sent down upon the apostles, according to the promise of our Lord Jesus Christ; and after the apostles, upon all those who believe in the name of the holy Church, the resurrection of the body, the forgiveness of sins, the kingdom of heaven, and the life everlasting."*

Here we find, in a somewhat prolix form, all the essential points of the formula known as the Apostles' Creed. The analogy is more striking in the concise formula which was used in the Church of Africa in the time of Cyprian. With the exception of the two last articles, this is precisely the creed now in use among us. It is evident that it was compiled from the formula of baptism, in which was intercalated the rule of faith as we see in Tertullian.† No one at that time made any pretence of tracing it to the apostles, as was

* "Constit. Apost.," vii. 4. † Cyprian, "Epist.," 697.

successfully done from the close of the fourth century. It was recognised in early times to be a simple and natural expansion of the primitive confession of faith made by the converts, which was just an epitome of the general belief of the Church during three centuries.* We may then regard it as the true creed of the primitive times. It expresses with simplicity, under the form of a material statement, but not without reference to the great Gnostic heresies which had so profoundly agitated the minds of men,* the beliefs which formed the joy and strength of primitive Christianity. The creed is raised far above all theology, of which it is grandly independent; it is indestructible, and is found in substance in all the great systems which attempt to give a satisfactory explanation of saving truth after it has been grasped and apprehended by the heart of the believer.

Beyond this the fathers are fully cognizant of the difference which exists between simple faith and religious science. They are careful that the former be not involved in the obscurities and uncertainties of the latter. Justin Martyr declares that the fact of the divinity of Christ abides unmoved, if the explanations of it are found inadequate. "O Trypho!" he says, "Jesus Christ will not cease to be the Son of God, even if I fail to prove that He pre-exists as the Son of Him from whom all things proceed. It may then be fairly said that I have fallen into some error, but not that He

* See M. Nicholas's book: "Le Symbole des Apôtres. Essai historique," Paris, 1867, c. iv. See also the admirable pamphlet of M. Viguier, on the same subject, and "L'histoire du Credo," by A. Coquerel, fils; also Germer-Baillière, 1869; though we hold the right of differing on some points from these honourable writers.

is not the Christ."* Thus we are warned that speculative errors are of no force to shake the faith of the heart, since that stands firm through all the often mistaken efforts of science. Origen traces with a no less steady hand the line of demarcation between faith and theology. After giving an epitome of the universal faith of Christians, he adds: "It is not clearly perceived whether we must admit that the Son of God was or was not begotten. But such questions must be resolved by the study of Holy Scripture and by wise research."† Thus the claims of faith, which should be no uncertain thing, are reconciled with those of Christian science, which within the limits of revelation should have free scope. No system of the schools, no scholastic formula can be drawn from the simple documents which represent primitive Christianity. Hence it lends itself with facility to the onward movement of thought, and to its investigation, made with holy boldness. It does not arrest inquiries by blind anathemas, and if it does not guarantee freedom from error, it does at least guide the seeker after truth, and guard him from a fatal fall. No power is comparable to that of a faith so sure of itself, so strict and severe on essential points, but so broad and tolerant on all matters coming within the range of science proper. It is true that as we approach the close of this period the Church manifests a growing tendency to forge the yoke of tradition and ecciesiastical authority; but that yoke did not press with all its weight upon theology till it had been

* *Οὐκ ἀπόλλυται τὸ τοιοῦτον εἶναι χριστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, ἐὰν ἀποδεῖξαι μὴ ἔύνωμαι ὅτι καὶ προυπῆρχεν υἱὸς τοῦ ποιητοῦ τῶν ὅλων θεόυ.* (Justin, "Dial. cum Tryph.," 267.)

† Origen, "De princip." i.; "Prefatio," 4.

placed upon the imperial anvil. The liberty at first enjoyed was only lost by degrees; it needed the combined effort of great councils and of crowned patrons of the Church to suppress it altogether.

§ II. *The various Schools and Tendencies in the Dogmatic Development of the Second and Third Centuries.*

We have now to describe the development of Christian theology in the second and third centuries, passing by the question of apologies, already treated, and the ecclesiastical controversies, which we reserve for the conclusion of our book. The men who exercised the preponderating influence in this development are known to us. We have not to deal with abstractions or creations of the reason. It is easy to trace in each system the mind of him who originated and developed it, and to recognise, as it were, his moral physiognomy. We have now to deal only with the doctrines themselves.

Two rocks must be avoided. We must guard against the spirit of system which applies its bold generalisations to facts, and moulds them to its own purposes, reducing them to a mutilated and fractional condition, in which ideas lose their true significance by being detached from their connection, or from their parent thought. The generalising process was pushed to the furthest limits in the history of Christian doctrine by two schools directly opposed to each other in everything except this question of method. The school of ultra-orthodoxy has made quite as bold use of it as the extreme speculative school. Both remodel the history,

instead of making it their guide, and commence by inserting that which they desire to discover in it. This arbitrary mode of interpretation has been freely followed by both parties in forming the doctrine of the second and third centuries. Subsequently theology assumes a fixed and rigorously defined form, which could not easily be made the subject of so complete a metamorphosis. This is not the case at the time when theology is, so to speak, in process of formation. With some effort and determination, refractory ideas are brought to conform to the required standard; but, at the same time, in the eager seeking after a predetermined creed, the sense of reality is lost, and the history is distorted.

This is the great reproach which we make against that which we have called ultra-orthodoxy, whether in the Catholic or Protestant sense of the word. The most moderate among the historians of dogma in the Catholic community is one of the oldest and most erudite. Father Petau makes an attempt, in his great book on "Dogmatic Theology,"* to establish the unanimity of all the doctors of the early ages, in order to adhere to the principle of Vincent de Lérins, as to the traditional orthodoxy which is to be found in all places, in all times, and among all teachers.† Nevertheless, in relation to the doctrine of the Trinity, he admits more than one divergence among the early Fathers. He seeks to modify these differences, declaring sometimes that they are insignificant, and arise only out of the defectiveness of theological speech;

* "De theologicis dogmatibus." Paris Edition, 1644.
† "Quod ab omnibus, quod ubique, quod semper."

sometimes that they result from the demands and difficulties of the Christian apology.* When, however, he comes to the actual exposition of the doctrine of these Fathers, he owns that Justin, Athenagoras, and Theophilus of Antioch taught the subordination of the Son to the Father.† Bossuet, in his polemics against Jurieu, on the occasion of his "Histoire des variations," carefully guards against making this concession. In an admirable paper, full of luminousness and nervous eloquence, he attempts to set aside every doubtful meaning of the most difficult texts of Justin Martyr or Athenagoras, and to bring them into conformity with the orthodoxy of Nicæa. His argument is very vague and general, however, in spite of its semblance of power. His noble language cannot conceal the weakness of his exegesis. He constantly reverts to the assertion that it is not possible that great saints, martyrs of Christ, should have derogated in thought from His eternal divinity. With such a method, there ceases to be any true inquiry into things as they are, and we note in its stead, the constant endeavour to discover that which, from the point of view adopted, should have been there.‡ Unhappily, this method is still followed by a large number of historians, both in Germany and France. Its drawbacks are very apparent in the history of doctrine by Henri Kleé,§ a

* "De theologicis dogmatibus," vol. ii. Preface, sec. 12.

† Ibid., vol. ii. chap. 3.

‡ "Advertissements aux Protestants sur les lettres du ministre Jurieu. Œuvres de Bossuet." Didot edition, vol. iv. p. 298, and following.

§ "Manuel de l'histoire des dogmes Chrétiens," by Henri Klée. Translated from the German by Abbé Mabire. Paris: Lecoffre, 1848.

work otherwise of no slight merit, which merges the divergence of doctrines in the fundamental agreement of the tradition, and attaches less importance than is due to the many discrepancies which do present themselves. "The general belief," he says, "is expressed by the particular creeds." From this stage it is but another step to do violence to the sense of the particular creeds, and that step is repeatedly taken by the author. The "History of Doctrine previous to the time of the Nicæan Council," by Schwane, displays more science in arriving at the same result, while it also makes some concessions with regard to the imperfectness of the doctrinal formulas of the Fathers of the second century.* Mœhler, in his "Patrology," maintains the unblemished orthodoxy of the first apologists; and, in spite of his great learning and felicitous mode of expression, he shows from the first that determined preconception which prevents the impartial study of the facts.† We find the same fault with kindred works published in France within the last few years. Under the designation of a "Cours d'éloquence sacrée," M. l'Abbé Freppel, canon of S. Geneviève, presents a complete picture of Christian literature up to the close of the third century. He there displays vast erudition, and his exposition—always lucid—is full of interest. It is lacking, however, in the high impartiality which seeks only that which history can fairly give, for he also violently coerces the often

* "Dogmengeschichte der vornicænischen Zeit." By Jos. Schwane. Münster, 1862.

† "La Patrologie, ou Histoire littéraire des trois premiers siècles de l'Eglise Chrétienne." Posthumous work of J. Mœhler. 2 vols. Translated by Jean Cohen. Paris, 1842.

vague thoughts of the Fathers of the earlier age into conformity with the orthodox standard of the fourth century.* The most important work treating of the history of doctrine before Nicæa, is the learned book of Mgr. Ginoulhac, bishop of Grenoble, entitled "Histoire du dogme catholique pendant les trois premiers siècles de l'Eglise."† The title indicates the method pursued. The author seeks to discover the Catholic dogma in all its rigour, as early as the second century. He commences by setting forth that doctrine as officially promulgated on each article, and thus he brings all the texts, even the most recalcitrant, into harmony with the orthodox formula, without allowing a moment's hesitation or any space for a gradual development. Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, and Tertullian are made to hold views as definite as those of Athanasius on the Trinity. It is not possible to do greater violence to the most elementary conditions of science, though the learning of the writer cannot be disputed. We shall have more than one occasion to adduce conclusive proofs of the statement just made, in our examination of ante-Nicæan theology.

All the schools of narrow orthodoxy agree in this *à priori* method, which imposes its own tenets on the history, instead of submitting to its teaching. We know how the idea of the smallest possible latitude of thought prevailing in Christian antiquity in relation to redemption and the Trinity, was repudiated by the English Evangelical school, which contributed so

* "Cours d'éloquence sacrée" (comprising the Apostolic Fathers, the Apologists, Tertullian). Paris. Bray, editor.

† Paris: Durand, 1866. 1st edition.

much to the reawakening of faith at the beginning of this century, but which has for a long time laid its yoke upon the religious thought of our French speaking countries. The mere mention of a history of doctrine would have been a scandal to this class of religionists, who claim to have found a faultless tradition, which, from the Reformation to the Vaudois, and from the Vaudois to the primitive times of Christianity, forms one unbroken chain of pure doctrine. Milner's "Church History," one of the most popular books of this school, shows how, under such treatment, the great sections of the primitive Church in the East and West may be deprived of all their suggestive originality.* Every diversified hue is merged in a common greyness. The dry Protestant scholasticism of the seventeenth century is carried back to the time of Irenæus, of Hippolytus, and Origen.

Thus does the spirit of system falsify history no less under the banner of the Reformation than under that of Catholicism. It is just to acknowledge that the scientific movement of the nineteenth century helped to widen the mental range of both parties. It is unnecessary to dwell here on the great labours of the German evangelical school, those vast and conscientious histories of doctrine to which we have had occasion again and again to refer our readers. They were

* "History of the Christian Church up to the middle of the sixteenth century," by J. Milner. Note especially vol. i. chap. 2, in which the author discovers the entire orthodoxy of his school in the three primitive ages. Clement of Alexandria and Origen are alone held worthy of severe mention, for having recognised some leements of good in the pagan philosophy, but substantially they are as orthodox as the rest. This book is a masterpiece of bigoted ignorance.

preceded by the polemical writings of Jurieu, in opposition to Bossuet. Basnages, in his learned work on the "History of the Church and its Succession," shows fairly the divergences between the Fathers; but even he is too much inclined to seek, side by side with the broad current, a thin stream of pure doctrine true to the tradition of the apostles. Dr. Newman, in his remarkable book on "The Development of Christian Doctrine,"* has attempted to lead contemporary Catholicism into this liberal and scientific track. The ingenious author admits without hesitation the variations of primitive theology. He distinguishes between the original and sacred fact, which he regards as the immutable essence of Christianity, and the explanations of that fact, which are susceptible of progress and expansion, and of a growing approximation to the divine realities. It is vain for Dr. Newman to pretend that this process of development has been carried on in one direct line in the Catholic Church, under the direction of an infallible authority, which was itself at first vague and indefinite. He retains, nevertheless, the right to note the divergences of the early Fathers, without feeling himself bound to cloak them under a garb of unity, and he may remain therefore an impartial and sincere historian. This scientific attempt, made with great learning and rare intellectual skill, is worthy of special note. It indicates to the Catholic theologians the only way of entering seriously and fairly upon the history of doctrine. It must be said, however, that Dr. Newman's is an isolated attempt,

* "History of the Development of Christian Doctrine," by J. H. Newman.

and that the historical method of absolute traditionalism, of which Vincent de Lérins is the representative, still predominates in a way very detrimental to the true interests of religious science.

The *à priori* tendency reappears also in the school most directly opposed to strict Catholic and Protestant orthodoxy. Here it speaks in the name of transcendental philosophy, and is honourably represented by the illustrious Baur, who has placed his vast scholarship and close dialectic power at the service of Hegel's philosophy. As we read his work on the first three centuries, we can but admire the marvellous keenness of analytic power in the exposition of the various systems. He represents the succession of doctrines as the fatal development of a metaphysical theorem, which he considers self-evident. It is the perpetual evolution of the infinite mind, which from an affirmation draws a negation, itself to become the parent of a new series of similar evolutions. Thus Judæo-Christianity and Paulinism form the first antithesis, which resolves itself into the broad speculation of the fourth gospel. Hence we have the opposition of Gnosticism and Montanism issuing in a fresh synthesis, which is the catholicity of the third century, at once speculative at Alexandria and realistic at Rome. This *à priori* philosophy, in spite of the superior talent and learning of the historian, produces a very phantasmagoria.*

* This system is embodied in the various works of Baur, and more especially in his "Discourses on the History of Doctrine," published after his death. With the exception of some interesting monographs, Protestant France has produced of late years only one important book on the "History of Doctrine," the work of M. Eugène Haag. (Paris : Cherbuliez, 1862.) This is rather a huge compilation than a history, strictly speaking : it takes the stand-

If the history of doctrine is bound to avoid the generalisations of the spirit of system, it is not justified in going to the other extreme, by following the method of indefinite subdivisions, an opposite error into which it has too often fallen. How many books there are, held in high estimation, in which the doctrinal history of an entire period is placed under the titles of general chapters, such as the inspiration of the Scriptures, the Trinity, redemption. Quotations from the Fathers are given heterogeneously, as if all had laboured together at the same theological weft and woof! Such an arrangement is altogether misleading. In truth, a doctrine receives its significance from the atmosphere in which it originates, and from its relation to the system of which it forms a part. We admit that the theologians are ranged in schools and groups when the affinity between them is plain; but nothing but confusion is the result, when the plan is so enlarged as to comprehend all the various tendencies of a great epoch. Our first care, then, will be to mark out clearly the different schools of thought, and next to seek in their most illustrious representatives, in those who may be regarded as their leaders, the central idea around which all the other parts of the system are grouped. This central thought we shall find to lie always in the conception of the relation between man and God, which is, in fact, the essential idea of religion; for

point of pure rationalism. It is very unsatisfactory, especially in relation to the first centuries. We wonder to find, for example, a chapter on Gnosticism, which altogether ignores sources of information recently opened. Evidently the writer has not carried into this great subject that thoroughness of scientific study which is the glory of Protestant France.

religion is but the name for the mode of the relation between the creature and his Creator. According as this conception implies more or less the harmony between the human and the divine, or rather the restoration of that harmony, the entire system will be modified in its scope and tendency. The idea of redemption exerts a profound influence upon the whole of theology. It is this which determines the notions entertained of the person of Christ, and of the union of the human and the divine in Him. The great question between justification by faith or works, the question of the sacraments, and of ecclesiastical authority, all depend on the solution given to the first problem. In truth, if man is really reconciled to God by the sacrifice of Christ, he is delivered from all that rose as a barrier between him and heaven. Religion works henceforth from within rather than from without. The nature of religious authority is changed, and the moral and spiritual influence becomes the great factor. If, on the other hand, there is no such thing as redemption, man is still in bondage in every sense. It is plain, then, that the doctrine of redemption is the main spring, the great motive power of the whole dogmatic and ecclesiastical organism. The slightest deflection of this centre of gravity is felt throughout the entire sphere of religious thought.

It will be needful for us to consider, in our estimate of the various religious systems, the influence of anterior philosophies. Whether philosophy be regarded with distrust or not, it is still true that it exerts an important influence in spiritual things. It creates the intellectual language of an age, and introduces

more or less its own formulæ. It is of the utmost importance to distinguish in the theology of the Fathers, between that which they derive from the gospel and that which they have retained from the great masters of ancient wisdom.* If, in the ripe age of Christianity, Cartesianism could set its stamp upon the theology of an entire century, it is not surprising that Platonism in its various forms, more or less modified, should have pressed heavily upon early Christian thought, without, however, absorbing it, unless in the form of heresy.† Heresy again is in its manner a factor of dogma, or at least of theology, whether by the reaction it calls forth, or by the secret influence it exercises, subtly diffusing itself through the moral atmosphere of the time. Gnostic heresy has contributed powerfully by its attacks to strengthen the theistic tendency, but it did not escape the influence of those too intellectual conceptions of Christianity, which transformed it at Alexandria into a divine Gnosticism, animated indeed with the vital breath of freedom, but not preserving sufficiently the character of a work of redemption and restoration. The exclusive pretensions of Judæo-Christianity led Christian theology to express, in all its beauty, the grand Christian idea of humanity; but without dwelling on the more or less rapid retrogression to sacerdotal and theocratic institutions, it is clearly to the Judaising spirit we must attribute the legal tendency which takes away the sim-

* See on this subject Ritter's "Histoire de la Philosophie Chrétienne," vol. vi.

† M. Vacherot, in his learned work, "Histoire de l'école d'Alexandrie," greatly exaggerates this influence of Platonist philosophy on Christian doctrine.

plicity of pardon. These transformations and deviations, however, only become manifest in gradual and unequal progression, and do not hinder a large and fruitful development of Christian thought, which on many points has never been surpassed. As long as the Church maintains its original freedom, error finds its own correction. It is with religious society as with those political systems which acknowledge no irremediable political evils. Absolutism alone is incurable in every sphere, because it sets upon evil the seal of an indisputable authority.

The Church is split up into two great sections. The East, which comprehends Greece and Egypt, is the country of speculation and of transcendental idealism. Here the great schools of philosophy take their rise. Here also is the cradle of theology, and hence it derives that blending of the speculative with the symbolical element by which it is specially characterised. The West, which comprises proconsular Africa, bears, both in its theology and practice, the strong and rough impress of Rome. We shall have first to note the antitheses, or, at least, the strongly marked differences in the genius of these two great Churches. But this division is not adequate to reproduce all the variety of theological schools in the second and third centuries. Of these we may mention four which were of primary importance. In the first place we have the Greco-Asiatic school, with Justin Martyr at its head; in the second, the school of Alexandrine Christianity, rendered illustrious by Clement and Origen; thirdly, the Gallio-Asiatic school of Irenæus and Hippolytus, which forms the transition

between the East and West; and, lastly, the African school, which, after the declamations of its fervid apostle, Tertullian, assumes its definite form under Cyprian. In this order we shall present the history of Christian theology, from Justin Martyr to the pacification of the Church.

CHAPTER II.

THE GRECO-ASIATIC SCHOOL.

THE first group of theologians forming a school, or at least presenting such a degree of intellectual kinship as may warrant us in classing them in one category, belongs at once to Asia and Greece. Asiatics by birth, they speak the philosophical language of Platonism, which exercises a most powerful influence upon their mode of thought, without casting doubt on their sincerity as Christians. They are distinguished from the Alexandrine school, only as the sketch is distinguished from the finished work; they hold in truth, in principle, and in germ, the grand ideas which were developed in the writings of Clement and of Origen. They have also the same imperfections in common, as we shall show, after giving an exposition of their system.

§ I. *The Letter to Diognetus.*

On the threshold of this period we meet with a most remarkable work, which lifts us above the formulæ of religious science into the domain of direct intuition. The "Letter to Diognetus," which has come down to us without the name of the writer, is one of the most precious treasures of Christian antiquity. It evidently does not belong to the first century, for it has not the

apostolic impress; and the manner in which Judaism is condemned *in toto*, is characteristic of the conflicts of the following age. We might suppose the writer to be a Marcionite, having cast off the vain speculations of Gnosticism; a Paulinist, somewhat extreme in his reaction against the synagogue, who failed to distinguish, as Paul did, between the Judaism of the prophets and that of the rabbis. The ardent enthusiasm of the unknown writer for the new religion, renders him unjust to that which preceded it. He thus bears to us a sublime echo of the school of Ephesus, of that doctrine of love which was the final utterance, and, as it were, the legacy of the apostolic age, but without the character of moderation which belongs only to the truly creative era in the history of the Church. That which constitutes the charm, the incomparable beauty of the "Letter to Diognetus," is its entire avoidance of the language of the schools; its thought and feeling spring from a common source. Hence the simplicity and freshness of the exposition. We seem to breathe in the pure, luminous atmosphere of early morning, at the dawning of a day whose sky will be often overcast with mists and clouds. And yet this letter is the introduction to the theology of the second century. The spirit of Justin Martyr is so strongly marked in these pages, that they have been often attributed to him, a supposition which, however, cannot be really sustained, not only because of the difference of the style, but also on account of many very characteristic divergences of doctrine.*

* We do not refer to the last two chapters, which are an evident interpolation.

The "Letter to Diognetus" was designed to establish the claims of Evangelical religion in the pagan mind. The writer pursues a historical method. He shows what was the part filled by this religion in the history of humanity, and how it was the divinely prepared climax of the long and obscure period extending from the fall of man to the coming of Christ. Passing by the apologetic point of view, and all that relates to the delineation of the Christian life, we shall endeavour to show what was the doctrinal idea of this writing. Religion is presented to us in the twofold character of a revelation and a redemption. True to the genius of Greece, the writer dwells mainly on the first character. To dispel the darkness of ignorance, to enlighten the human mind by the true knowledge of God, is the essential object of the Gospel and of the Word, of whom the divine book is the perfect manifestation. Truth is for Christians neither an earthly discovery nor a perishable doctrine; nor, again, is it the depository of mere human mysteries. "The Almighty God, Creator of all things, the invisible God, has sent it down from heaven. His holy and incomprehensible Word has come among men, and sought a fixed abode in their hearts."* Before His coming none had succeeded in finding the knowledge of God, as is proved by the gross worship of idolatrous nations, and by the vain imaginations of the philosophers.† Judaism receives no higher meed than paganism, for if it had some knowledge of the true God, it yet imagined that He had need of material gifts, and offered to Him

* Ἐγκατεστήριξε ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν. ("Letter to Diognetus," ch. 7. Hefele edition. Tubingen, 1847.) † Ibid., chap. 8.

sacrifices of blood. The true light, then, came only with Jesus Christ. This light does not merely illuminate the reason, it warms the heart and saves the lost sinner. Christianity is a redemption, while it is also a revelation, or rather it is the revelation of redemption. "God has not hated us; He has not been mindful of our wickedness; He has borne with our sins, and has given His own Son as the price of our redemption—'the just for the unjust.' Righteousness alone could cover sin. O sweet exchange, by which the iniquity of many is hidden by One who is righteous, and the righteousness of one justifies many sinners!"† No exact doctrinal statement can be drawn from these words; they contain the simple affirmation of the salvation of mankind by the work of Jesus Christ. His righteousness has covered our sins, and has redeemed us. The writer goes no further. There is no trace in the "Letter to Diognetus" of a satisfaction of the Divine anger; for God, it is said, did not hate us. The Son, then, had not to endure a curse which had no existence; He has simply covered us with His holiness as with a shield. The idea of sacrifice, properly so called, is not grasped by the author. Hence the severity of his condemnation of the Jewish sacrifices. He even goes so far as to regard them as superstitious acts, by which the Jews sought to purchase by a gift the favour of God.* Evidently, if the writer had admitted an expiation in the true sense, he would have connected the work of Christ with the sanguinary rites of the old covenant. It is not possible to fill up this gap in the system except by additions from other sources. The substitu-

* "Letter to Diognetus," chap. 9. † Ibid., chap. 3.

tion of the Righteous One for sinners is clearly taught, but not His direct condemnation by God in the sinner's stead. The death of the Son is a proof of the love of the Father for us, and nothing more. The Cross speaks only of love and of holiness. We do not pretend that this explanation is adequate, but it is the explanation given by the "Epistle to Diognetus."

The idea of God is therein developed altogether according to the thought of St. John. Omnipotence and omniscience are not the primary attributes of the Deity. God is more than the Most High and the All-Wise. He is, in His essence, *love*. "To gain the mastery over one's neighbour, to crush him in his weakness, to acquire wealth and do violence to inferiors, none of these things bring happiness to man; it is not thus he can imitate God. These things have no affinity with the Divine Majesty. If thou lovest thou shalt be the imitator of His mercy."* In creating, He has no other motive than the good of His creature; the creature is therefore a work of His love, and His glory is to be loved. He has been ever the same; He cannot change now or in any future time; He will be always kind, good, incapable of anger; He alone is good.†

The "Letter to Diognetus" affirms in explicit terms that the Word is neither an angel, nor one of those beings who govern terrestrial things, or to whom is entrusted the administration of the heavenly world; but that He is the Creator of heaven and earth.‡ The

* "Letter to Diognetus," chap. 10.

† Οὗτος ἦν μὲν ἀεὶ τοιοῦτος, καὶ ἔστι, καὶ ἔσται, χρηστὸς καὶ ἀγαθὸς καὶ ἀόργητος καὶ ἀληθής. (Ibid., chap. 8.)

‡ Αὐτὸν τὸν τεχνίτην καὶ δημιουργὸν τῶν ὅλων. (Ibid., chap. 7.)

Word is thus distinct from every creature. The writer does not enter further into the Divine ontology, and he even seems to confound the second and third persons of the Trinity in the passage which we have quoted as to the dwelling of the Word in the human heart. The Son knew the purpose of the Father to save the world; He was one with Him in the mystery of the eternal love. Although, as we have seen, the "Letter to Diognetus" rejects all the culture of the ancients, not recognising in it one gleam of truth, it does not nevertheless assume a radical opposition between the human and divine nature. No; man is a divine being, who, by love, has such a participation in the character of his Creator, that he becomes God. Every benefactor is in truth the God of those whom he has benefited.* Faith is the inward eye which sees God. Moral freedom is eloquently asserted, in opposition to Gnostic fatalism. "The Son was not sent, as might be thought, to rule with a rod of iron, and to inaugurate a reign of terror. No; He came in clemency and gentleness. God sent Him, like a king sending his son, who is also a king; for He sent Him as a God among men to save and to persuade, not to do violence, for violence is not of God."† How, in truth, can love be other than liberty? This respect for human freedom explains the delay in the mission of the Redeemer. A moral correspondence was needed to be established between Him and the race of man. He came when mankind had had time to prove experimentally its own wretchedness and powerlessness to save itself.

* Θεὸς γίνεται τῶν λαμβανόντων. ("Letter to Diognetus," chap. 10.)
† Ibid., chap. 7.

Such a theology cannot favour a system of external authority. Hence all the episcopal pretensions so largely advanced at this period are not even adverted to. The whole Christian life is placed under the law of liberty. The writer has formed too poor a conception of the providential character of the old law, to desire to assign it any place in the gospel economy. He treats with ridicule the prescriptive observance of Sabbath and fast. The current of his thought, as well in its weakness and faultiness as in its truth and strength, is such as to alienate him absolutely from all hierarchical and sacramental tendencies: he is rather led to a mysticism full of stern moral purpose. This pure and gentle breeze was not strong enough to fill the sails of the vessel. The paramount influence must necessarily belong to more positive and aggressive schools. The "Letter to Diognetus" remains an isolated monument, towering grandly over all that surrounds it.

§ II. *The Theology of Justin Martyr.**

That which is rightly called the theology of Justin presents singular contrasts, as we may have anticipated from the imperfectness of his apologetic method. This generous thinker, who establishes so clearly the relationship between the human soul and God, and sets aside dualistic fatalism in all its stages, falls nevertheless under the influence of Platonism, and even adopts, in some measure, the allegorical exegesis of the rabbis. If he had followed the truly scriptural inspiration of

* See Semisch's admirable monograph, "Justin der Mart.," vol. ii. Breslau, 1840.

the "Letter to Diognetus," while disengaging its thought from the fetters of the Greek philosophy, he would have been led, by the most simple process of deduction, to place the eternity of the Word on its true basis. In fact, if God is by His very essence eternal love, He must needs have an object to love apart from and above the world, and this object can be no other than the Word. Thus understood, the Word appears as the necessary complement of the divine life. Without the Son, God would not be the Father; He would not be essential love. The "Letter to Diognetus" did not draw this conclusion, because it was in no way metaphysical; but the idea would have forced itself upon a mind so logical as that of Justin, if he had only followed out this precious clue. Unhappily, while acknowledging fully that the gospel is the manifestation of the Divine mercy, he has not given to love a central place in his theology. God is to him, as to the more or less modified Platonism of his time, essentially the Absolute, the Incomprehensible. Hence the Logos is the revealing organ, the Word, or the utterance of the Divine mind, rather than the only and well-beloved Son. The Incomprehensible Absolute is complete in Himself; He needed nothing but to know Himself. He is under no necessity to seek His own manifestation in a being distinct from Himself. He may at will produce or beget such a being, or He may remain self-contained. The distinction of the Divine Persons is not, then, an eternal necessity of the absolute existence; it is, as it were, an accidental circumstance, having a beginning. His origin may indeed be traced back to far distant ages, before the creation

of the world, but He is not eternal. This is the first error of the system. We shall see how long it weighed upon Christian theology. This is the explanation of the too intellectual character of the whole doctrine of Justin, and of his depreciation of the redemption. The Word being in its essence a revealer, the essential point is the manifestation of the incomprehensible, and religion is thus, primarily, a transcendental science.

The too abstract theodicy of Justin comes out in passages like the following: "The ineffable Father, who is the Lord of the universe, abides in the region where He dwells, and nothing escapes Him of all that may be seen and heard: not that He uses eyes or ears, but by His indescribable power He perceives and is cognisant of all things. He knows no such thing as movement. No place, not the whole world itself can contain Him, who *is* before the world was. How, then, being such an One, could He speak to a man, or be seen by him on an imperceptible point of earth?* The people could not behold His glory on Sinai, even when it was only reflected from His servant Moses. The priest dared not stand erect before the temple built by Solomon, when the Ark had been placed in it. Not Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob, nor any man has seen the Father, the ineffable Lord of the universe, and of Jesus Christ Himself."† He alone has been visible who, according to the counsel and pleasure of God, is at once God and the Son, and is called also the Angel of the Lord fulfilling His will. He is named

* Πῶς ἂν οὖν ἡ λαλήσειε πρός τινα ἢ ὀφθείη τινί. (Justin, "Dial. cum Tryph.," chap. 127. "Opera," p. 357. Cologne Edition, 1688.)

† Οὔτε ἄλλος ἀνθρώπων εἶδε τὸν πατέρα καὶ ἄῤῥητον Κύριον τῶν πάντων. (Ibid., chap. 127.)

the Word, because He conveys to men the mind of God.* Thus does Justin formulate with all possible clearness the fundamental distinction made by Philo between the invisible and the manifested God. The hidden, ineffable God is alone the absolute, the first principle, the Most High.

Decided and exact as Justin is in his affirmation of the divinity of Jesus Christ, he does not admit either His complete equality with the Father, nor even His eternal pre-existence, at least as a distinct person. He affirms His subordination in the most positive manner. The Son is in the second rank.† He converses with Abraham under the oak at Mamre, as the messenger of the Most High God, who is in heaven, and fulfils the charge entrusted to Him.‡ He it is again who appears to Moses in the burning bush.§ The supreme God could not appear in one corner of the world. He manifests Himself by His Son, who is the ever ready and obedient executor of His will.‖ All the theophanies of the Old Testament refer to Him, since He is the revealed God, the Word of the hidden and ineffable Jehovah. If He is one with His Father in will, He is, so to speak, numerically distinguished from Him.¶ This subordination is the more readily to be understood since the distinct and personal existence of the Son had a beginning. God, before He called any creatures into being, begat of Himself a power, which is called

* Justin, "Dial. cum Tryph.," chap. 128.

† Ἐν δευτέρᾳ χώρᾳ. ("Apol.," ii. p. 70.) Mgr. Ginouilhac vainly endeavours to weaken the force of this expression (ii. p. 115).

‡ Ὁ καὶ Θεὸς καὶ Κύριος τῷ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς ὑπηρετῶν. ("Dial. cum Tryph.," chap. 56, p. 279.)

§ "Apol.," ii. p. 95. ‖ "Dial. cum Tryph.," chap. 127.

¶ Ἀριθμῷ ἀλλὰ οὐ γνώμῃ. (Ibid., chap. 86, p. 276.)

by the Holy Spirit the glory of the Lord, or the Son, or Wisdom, or the Angel of the Lord, or God, or again, the Lord and the Word, sometimes again, the Head over all things. He it is who appeared in human form to Joshua, the son of Nun. He may bear these various names, because He is ever fulfilling the will of the Father, and because He was begotten by the will of the Father.* Justin compares this generation to the production of language by the lips of man, which in no way diminishes the inward power from which it proceeds, while it gives it nevertheless a distinct form. The Word is likened again to fire, which diminishes in nothing the central source from which it springs, though it shoots upwards in a vivid flame.† The Word is the Son truly produced by the Father, and who was with the Father before any created life began. To Him, as to the creative power, the words were addressed: "Let us make man in our own image." Solomon recognised Him as the Wisdom or the reason of God.‡ Does it then follow that this Word, who was from all eternity hidden with God, was only called into distinct existence at the moment of creation, or for the purpose of creation? Such seems to be the drift of the following words: "The Father of the universe has no name, not having been begotten. But it is not thus with His Son, with Him who is called *the Son* by way of pre-emi-

* Ἀρχὴν πρὸ πάντων τῶν κτισμάτων ὁ Θεὸς γεγέννηκε δύναμιν τινὰ ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ λογικὴν, ποτὲ δὲ υἱὸς, ποτὲ δὲ Σοφία, ποτὲ δὲ Ἄγγελος, ποτὲ δὲ Θεὸς, ποτὲ δὲ Κύριος καὶ Λόγος· ἔχει γὰρ πάντα προσονομάζεσθαι, ἐκ τοῦ ὑπηρετεῖν τῇ πατρικῇ βουλήματι, καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς θελήσει γεγενῆσθαι. ("Dial. cum Tryph.," chap. 62, p. 284.) † Ibid., chap. 64, p. 284.

‡ Τοῦτο τὸ τῷ ὄντι ἀπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς προβληθὲν γέννημα, πρὸ πάντων τῶν κτισμάτων συνῆν τῷ πατρί. (Ibid., chap. 62, p. 285.)

nence. This Word, who was one with the Father before the creation, and *who was begotten when in the beginning God created and formed all things by Him*—this Word has a name."* Evidently the God without a name, the Incomprehensible, Absolute, only emerged from the mysterious obscurity of His being at the moment of creation. Then the Word within took an outward and distinct form, at once calling beings into life, and revealing to them the ineffable Father. This doctrine is developed with incomparably greater clearness by the successor of Justin, but it is an inherent part of his system. He carefully avoided everything approaching the idea of emanation, by ascribing the generation of the Word to an act of the Divine will, and not to a sort of metaphysical necessity. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is mentioned rather than developed by Justin. He places Him in the third rank, and thus marks His subordination still more decidedly.† He even goes so far as to identify Him with the Word.‡ In a paragraph of a text of Isaiah, which runs thus: "I am the Lord, and my glory will I not give to another" (Isa. xlii. 8), Justin

* Ὁ λόγος πρὸ τῶν ποιημάτων καὶ συνὼν καὶ γεννώμενος. ὅτε τὴν ἀρχὴν δι' αὐτοῦ πάντα ἔκτισε καὶ ἐκόσμησε. ("Dial. cum Tryph.," chap. 62.) Dorner seems to us not to give to the word ὅτε its true meaning, and arbitrarily changes it into ὅτι, in disputing the coincidence between the hypostatic production of the Word and the creation. (Work cited, p. 423.) These texts are decisive in setting aside the absolutely Athanasian interpretation given to the system of Justin by the writers we have quoted. We have here not a mere apologetic accommodation, but a positive affirmation of the subordination of the Son to the Father, in connection with the formal negation of the eternal pre-existence of the Word as a person.

† "Apol.," ii. p. 60.

‡ Τὸ πνεῦμα οὖν ὀυδὲν ἄλλο νοῆσαι θέμις, ἢ τὸν λόγον. (Ibid., ii. p. 75.)

shows that God can only give His honour to Him who is the Light of the nations, that is, to Jesus Christ.* If he had believed in the distinct divinity of the Holy Spirit, he would not have used such language as this, which excludes the adoration of any divine being save the Father and the Son. We see how vague is as yet the Trinitarian idea.

The universe is the work of the Word of God. The moral creature is its Alpha and Omega. Our world was made with a view to man,† a being in whose nature we may, with St. Paul, distinguish three compact parts—body, soul, and spirit.‡ He stands in an altogether peculiar relation to God and His Son, for he participates in the Divine nature; the higher life in him is the germ of the Word, that spermatic Word which is the most original and suggestive trait in Justin's "Apology."§ Liberty is his appanage; it is, moreover, the very law of the moral world—its essential condition.‖ Evil is not traced to a natural fatality, as by the Gnostics, nor is it identified with matter; it is a revolt of the will, an act of disobedience, the abuse of liberty. "We do not allow," says Justin, "that fate rules the actions of men, or the events of their life. Good and evil alike depend on every man's free choice." The angels were also created free and responsible beings like men. Those who have become demons have only themselves and the determinations

* "Dial. cum Tryph.," p. 289. † "Apol.," i. 43.

‡ "Frag. de Resurrect.," sec. 13. (Grabe, "Spicileg.," ii. p. 192.)

§ Τὸ ἔμφυτον παντὶ γένει ἀνθρώπων σπέρμα τοῦ λόγου. ("Apol.," ii. p. 46.)

‖ Ἀντεξούσιον τῶν ἀγγέλων γένος, καὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς. (Ibid., i. p. 45.)

of their own will to blame. If liberty be denied, there can be no longer good or evil, merit or demerit, virtue or vice. How, then, can it be explained that the same man often changes his course of conduct? God has not created man like animals or trees, which have no freedom of choice; neither rewards nor punishments would have any application to actions which are mechanical or compulsory.* The moral law, however obscured by the darkness of hell, still asserts its universal sway, and every upright conscience bows before it.

It is the violation of this sacred law which has formed the dark kingdom of evil oppressing us on every side. Justin attaches the greatest importance to the part taken by the demons in the history of humanity. Without at all calling in question the fall of Adam,† he dwells further more upon the deplorable degradation which has followed in the track of idolatry, and this he ascribes to the power of demons born of adulterous relations between the angels and the daughters of men. Thus has a great catastrophe been brought upon our earth, for these angels were charged by God with the guardianship of earth and of mankind. They were His delegates and vicegerents. Their corruption has made a radical revolution in the spiritual order. The demons are beings endowed with a mysterious but real power, who are capable of troubling the imaginations of men by means of visions and sorceries. They have thus brought men into bondage, and succeeded in securing their worship for themselves, as the false gods of the ancient world. Paganism is

* Οὐ γὰρ ὥσπερ τὰ ἄλλα, οἷον δένδρα καὶ πετράποδα, μηδὲν δυνάμενα προαιρέσει πράττειν, ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον. ("Apol.," ii. p. 81.)

† "Dial. cum Tryph.," chap. 124, p. 352.

therefore an infernal power, full of reality, working upon our world for its destruction.*

In idolatry that power of evil is concentrated which exercises so odious a tyranny over the human race. Mankind, as a whole, is, as it were, the prey of a demoniacal power, whose mysterious influence is to be cancelled by another no less mysterious. Herein consists mainly the work of redemption. It is, first of all, a glorious victory over the demons, and consequently over sin; its results are the emancipation and sanctification of the human soul. In order to effect this, the Word became incarnate in Jesus, born by miracle of the Virgin. This appearing is not transitory, like the theophanies of the Old Testament, but final.† It is not partial, as in the individuals of human race who have the germ of the Word within them. It is absolute; the whole Word was manifested in Christ.‡ There exists indeed a real affinity between Him and humanity, for He renders it truly divine: "Just as from one man, Jacob—surnamed Israel—one whole race has received its name, so have we received ours from Jesus, by whom we are born unto God. We are called, and in truth we are, the children of God."§ In order to give more precision to this thought, he quotes Psalm lxxxii., in which men are called gods, and concludes with these words: "Power has been granted to men to become gods and the sons of the Most High."‖ It follows that the incarnate Word realises in all its

* "Apol.," i. pp. 44, 56. † "Dial. cum Tryph.," chaps. 30-32.

‡ *Τοῦ παντὸς λόγου.* ("Apol.," i. p. 46.)

§ *Καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀπὸ τοῦ γενήσαντος ἡμᾶς εἰς θεὸν Χριστοῦ θεοῦ τέκνα ἀληθινὰ καλούμεθα καὶ ἐσμέν.* ("Dial. cum Tryph.," chap. 123, p. 353.)

‖ Ibid., chap. 124.

fulness the idea or ideal of humanity. Justin does not enter into any explanation of the union of the divine and human in the Redeemer; he simply affirms it. He acknowledges Him as the complete representative of the new humanity; so that His death is the death of the power of corruption, which clings to our body since the Fall, and His resurrection becomes our resurrection also. Corruption having crept into human nature, it was necessary that the Redeemer should put away the polluting substance. Now this could only be done on condition that He who was essential life should join Himself to the element which had been thus polluted, and should destroy the corruption, that so the presence of the immortal element might preserve that which had been defiled.* "The Word therefore assumed a body, in order to deliver us from the corruption which had fastened itself upon our nature. Thus upon the cross Jesus vanquished death. Rising again, He gave us in His own person the resurrection and eternal life."† We are truly identified with Him, and become bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh.

Upon the nature of the work of redemption itself, Justin's views are indistinct. He commences by recognising the reality of the humiliation of the Word, His conformity to our nature, in all save sin, by His subjection to the conditions of gradual development and suffering. He, like all the fathers, quotes the prin-

* Ἡ κατὰ φύσιν ζωὴ προσεπλάκη τῷ τὴν φθορὰν δεξαμένῳ, ἀφανίζουσα μὲν τὴν φθοράν. (Grabe, "Spicileg.," ii. p. 172. "Ex Sermone contra Gentes.")

† Διδοὺς ἡμῖν ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀνάστασιν. (Ibid., i. p. 178. "De resurrect.")

cipal texts in which St. Paul speaks of the efficacy of the death of Jesus; but that death really signifies, in his view, nothing more than a victory over the powers of darkness. This is what he calls the mystery of the Cross, the indication of which he traces not only in the types of the Old Testament, but also in the most simple popular usages.* "We ask of God," he says to Trypho, "to keep us by Jesus Christ from the power of the demons, to whom we once rendered homage. We invoke His aid as our Redeemer, and the demons tremble before the power of His name. Adjured by this name of Jesus, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, the procurator of the Jews, they obey us, so that it may be evident to all that the Father has given us the power to bring the demons into subjection to the economy of His passion." †

Upon the cross the type of the brazen serpent found its antitype. The holy Victim there vanquished the old serpent. Here is the profound mystery of the defeat of the serpent who caused the revolt of Adam.‡ Justin calls it the mystery of the wood of the cross.§ There the powers of darkness were exorcised, the spell of their sorceries was broken. The cross is again compared to the wood by which Elisha drew up the axe which had fallen into the water: it draws us up out of the deep, into which our sins had plunged

* "Dial. cum Tryph.," chaps. 90, 91.

† *Ὥστε καὶ τὰ δαιμόνια ὑποτάσσεσθαι τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτου καὶ τῇ τοῦ γενομένου πάθους αὐτοῦ οἰκονομίᾳ.* (Ibid., chap. 30, p. 247.)

‡ *Μυστηριον ἐκήρυσσε, δι' οὗ καταλύειν μὲν τὴν δύναμιν τοῦ ὄφεως τοῦ καὶ τὴν παράβασιν ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἀδὰμ γενέσθαι ἐργασαμένου, ἐκήρυσσε.* (Ibid., chap. 91, p. 322.)

§ *Ξύλου τοῦτὸ μυστήριον τοῦ σταυροῦ.* (Ibid., chap. 138, p. 367.)

us.* Justin contents himself with only affirming the triumph of Jesus over Satan; the idea of a ransom paid to our tyrant has not yet presented itself, nor does he speak of a ransom demanded by God. If he dwells upon the sufferings of the Redeemer, if, to use his own beautiful expression, he sees in these the characteristic mark of the Christ, those sufferings are not in his view a sacrifice for sin; the death of Christ is not an expiation, properly so called. His interpretation of the Jewish sacrifices, in which he sees only the punishment of the idolatry of the chosen people, shows that he has not understood the deep need of reparation, which will not let the human conscience rest, and of which the Levitical worship was the sublime expression; while, at the same time, it held forth to view, under a transparent veil, the great expiation of Calvary. "The sacrifices," said Justin, "were on account of the sins of the people and their idolatry; but no real necessity could be urged in support of them." † It was the adoration of the golden calf, in his view, which led to the distinction between animals clean and unclean. All is then accidental, external, in these fundamental institutions of Mosaism, which had, however, no meaning at all, except as expressing the need of reparation and expiation. If he makes an exception in the case of the paschal lamb, he does not regard even that as a victim in the proper sense of the word, but as a figure of the Christ-deliverer, whose blood saves us because it was shed in His victorious conflict with the demons.‡ He only compares Him to the goat Azazel, because

* "Dial. cum Tryph.," ch. 86. † Ibid., ch. 22. ‡ Ibid., ch. 40.

upon Him rested the execration of the Jewish people.* Nothing more can be drawn from his declaration that Christ is a sacrifice for all those who repent.† The crucifixion is indeed an immolation, which brings salvation to us, but that immolation is not a debt paid to God and to Satan; it is a victory over hell. In order to achieve this triumph and to heal us, Jesus must needs take part in our griefs,‡ and primarily in that death whose dart was broken in His breast. But in achieving this conquest over hell, He never descended into hell for a single instant, nor did He, in any true sense, so experience the anger of His Father, that His sufferings might be set in the balance against our sins. Justin plainly asserts that God gave His Son up to endure cruel anguish for us. The most bitter drop in this cup of anguish was that of which Paul speaks, when he says: "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." But the curse which rested upon this holy Victim in no way resembled that which falls upon the violator of the law. "Just as God did not contradict Himself, when He ordered the serpent of brass to be made (though He had forbidden the making of images in a general manner), so there is no contradiction between the declaration of the law, that every one that hangeth on a tree is accursed, and the fact that no curse is pronounced on the Christ of God, who was to be the Saviour of all those who had committed acts worthy of condemnation."§ All men, Gentiles and

* Ὡς ἀποπομπαῖον αὐτὸν παρεπέμψαντο οἱ πρεσβύτεροι. ("Dial. cum Tryph.," chap. 40, p. 259.)

† Προσφορὰ ἦν ὑπὲρ πάντων τῶν μετανοεῖν βουλομένων. (Ibid., ch. 40.)

‡ Ibid., chap. 103.

§ Ὅτι δὲ καὶ κατὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ κατάρα κεῖται, δι' οὗ σώζει πάντας τοὺς κατάρας ἄξια πράξαντας. (Ibid., chap. 95, p. 322.)

Jews, have justly incurred the Divine malediction. If upon Jesus a curse was laid for them, it was assuredly not that which would have justly come upon them by direct visitation of God.

"These words of the law, *Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree*," Justin expressly says, "do not confirm our hope in the Crucified One in this sense, that the curse which visits Him comes from God; but they are a declaration in the name of God that you all, and those who are like you, will fail to recognise in the crucified One, Him who is before all else, the eternal priest of God, destined to be both King and Christ. You may see with your own eyes the fulfilment of this prophecy, for in your synagogues you call all those accursed who bear the name of Jesus; while the Gentiles, passing from insults to injuries, put to death any one who simply says, 'I am a Christian.' If Jesus Christ then has borne the curse of all men, it is in the sense of being made the object of universal execration."* After this commentary on the words of Justin, given by himself, there is no more room for doubt.† The cry of mysterious desolation uttered by Jesus on the cross, has no more special meaning than the other expressions of His

* Καὶ γὰρ τὰ εἰρημένα ἐν τῷ νόμῳ, ὅτι ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ὁ κρεμάμενος ἐπὶ ξύλου, οὐχ ὡς τοῦ θεοῦ καταρωμένου τούτου τοῦ ἐσταυρωμένου ἀλλ' ὡς προειπόντος τοῦ θεοῦ τὸ ὑφ' ὑμῶν πάντων καὶ τῶν ὁμοίων ὑμῖν μὴ ἐπισταμένον, τοῦτον εἶναι τὸν πρὸ πάντων ὄντα. ("Dial. cum Tryph.," chap. 96, p. 323.)

† The quotations already given suffice to foil absolutely the attempt made by M. Pozzy, in his *historical* work on the "Doctrine of Redemption," to connect Justin's idea with the traditional orthodoxy of our own day. Justin emphatically denies that Jesus was in any sense whatever the object of the Father's curse; the curse of man is all that is intended by the expressions used.

soul's anguish; and the prayer which mingles with His groans is only a sublime lesson, teaching us to flee to God in the hour of death, and to ask Him to deliver us from the dark and evil angel.* It follows that, in his view, redemption is the great and mysterious battle gained by the incarnate and crucified Word over Satan and his armies, in the dark night of Calvary. Salvation preserves indeed its character of reality; it is not simply a declaration, it is dependent on the death of Christ, which is not a mere symbol, but a real work of Divine love. Justin thus holds the great fact of the Gospel faith, incomplete as is his conception of it; but this does not justify any in attributing to him ideas which do not belong to him, and which did not make their appearance in theology until a much later period.

The resurrection of Christ occupies a large place in the writings of Justin.† Although he uses freely the texts of St. Paul on the appropriation of salvation, it is certain that he uses them in a strangely altered sense. How could it be otherwise? The inadequacy of his conception of redemption must necessarily be manifested in his idea of faith. When the work of Christ is considered as the complete re-establishment of our relation with God, by the redeeming sacrifice, nothing remains for man but to ratify that which has been accomplished for him on the cross, and to unite himself with this new humanity which has found grace in the eyes of the Lord. The act of faith which, to use the expression of St. Paul, plants us together with Jesus in His crucifixion and resurrection, makes our

* "Dial. cum Tryph.," chap. 105. † Ibid., chaps. 106, 107.

own all that He has endured and achieved for us. But this is not so when His work is conceived as a simple victory over the powers of darkness. We are indeed freed from their yoke; but we have, by our own efforts, to win the favour of God for ourselves. Jewish legalism enters by this breach made in the Christian system of morality. Justin Martyr is upheld on this slippery foothold by his true Christian feeling, and he joyfully repeats the grand statements of justifying faith which abound in the epistles of the apostle of the Gentiles. Nevertheless the discrepancy of thought is patent.* It is especially manifest in the view taken by Justin of the relations of the Old and New Covenant.

Judging of his system from without, and superficially, we should be ready to say none ever carried further than he the opposition to Judæo-Christianity. He energetically repudiates all that belongs to the rites and observances of Judaism; he professes the broadest universalism, lowers all national barriers, and openly avows that the children of Abraham have no longer any peculiar religious prerogative, but that the Church is the Israel of God. He as strongly denies the existence of any special priesthood, declaring that every man is a priest of Jesus Christ; he will not recognise any holy day, any more than he will admit a holy caste. The Lord's day has never, in his view, been hallowed in lieu of the Jewish Sabbath. The sanctuary, where alone sacrifice might be offered, has for ever perished. Christians are the temple of God, and all ordinances concerning purifications and washings are among the old things passed away. Spirituai

* See on this point Ritschl's "Altcathol. Kirche," p. 228, *et seq.*

fasting, which consists in abstinence from evil, has taken the place of the material fast, and sacrifices of blood have vanished before the living sacrifice of the soul, as circumcision has given place to baptism. On all these points Justin asserts the supremacy of evangelical spirituality. "We are," he says, "the spiritual Israel, brought to God by the crucified Christ.* A new circumcision has become necessary, and you glory only in that which is in the flesh. The new law teaches us to observe a perpetual Sabbath, and you only consecrate to God a single day.† When you have eaten unleavened bread you think you have fulfilled the law of God; yet the Lord our God takes no pleasure in such observances. If there is among you a false swearer, a thief, who forsakes his evil way; if an adulterer repents and turns to God, then may you have a true and joyful Sabbath-keeping to the Lord. Put away from you all wrath, and envy, and covetousness.‡ Eat that unleavened bread which consists in ceasing from sin."

After such utterances as these, it may well be asked, where was the Judaising spirit in such a man? With regard to outward institutions, beyond question he was absolutely free from it; but in the tenor and governing principle of his doctrine it was no less evident. In truth, he presents Christianity rather as a new law than as the covenant of grace and free pardon. Doubtless moral obligation is not relaxed by the gospel, since

* Ἰσραηλιτικὸν τὸ ἀληθινὸν, πνευματικόν. ("Dial. cum Tryph.," chap. 11, p. 229.)

† Σαββατ.ζειν ὑμᾶς ὁ καινὸς νόμος διαπαντὸς ἐθέλει, καὶ ὑμεῖς μίαν ἀργοῦντες ἡμέραν, εὐσεβεῖν δοκεῖτε. (Ibid., chap. 12.)

‡ Ibid., chap. 12, pp. 18-25.

it demands of us holiness. The law of liberty is the perfect law, but it is distinguished from the old law, in that it connects the moral life with a salvation already accomplished, and does not require it as, in any sense or degree, the discharge of our debt towards God; a discharge which the sinner has no power to offer, and the futile endeavour after which will only plunge him into deep distress. This was the point on which Justin failed. Jesus Christ, according to his teaching, came rather to reveal to us a new law, by fulfilling which we may make ourselves acceptable to God, than to bring us a full deliverance. He is the second and divine Moses, the legislator who initiates a purified Judaism; but as this second Judaism was already contained in principle in the Decalogue, and needed only to be freed from the ceremonial additions and later institutions, added because of the sins of the people, the line of demarcation in the moral point of view fluctuates dubiously between the Old and New Testament. "The law proclaimed on Horeb," says Justin, "has grown old, and is for you alone; our law is for all men everywhere. It is new and eternal, and has been given to us by Christ, who is our legislator."*

The idea of human merit already reasserts itself, though with diffidence. The chief end of the sacrifice of Christ is to place us in a condition in which we may achieve some merit of our own, the power of Satan being broken, and death vanquished, and, as it were, swallowed up in victory by the resurrection of the Word. Among these possible merits Justin mentions repentance, a theoretical knowledge of Jesus Christ

§ Πάρεστιν ὁ νομοθέτης. ("Dial. cum Tryph.," chap. 11.)

and of His work, and the practice of that which is good. "If you repent of your sins," he says, "if you recognise Jesus as the Christ, and if, in keeping His commandments, you own that it was the Father's will that He should suffer these things, in order that you might be healed by His wounds, you will obtain the pardon of sin."* The true and the false are subtly blended in this statement, for doing good is made one of the conditions of forgiveness. Christians and the saints of the Old Covenant have, in fact, one and the same path of salvation set before them. The law of Moses enjoins on its followers to fulfil that which is essentially in harmony with goodness and piety. Thus all those who have realised the essential good, general and eternal, are agreeable to God, and will be saved by Christ in the resurrection day; alike the Jews who lived before the law, Noah, Enoch, and Jacob, and the Gentiles, with those Jews who have acknowledged Jesus as the Son of God.† This passage is decisive, and it strongly limits the significance of the other declaration already quoted: "He was to suffer, to purify by His blood those who believe in Him."‡ Justin nevertheless holds a position raised above all the various schools of Judæo-Christianity, by the elevation of his doctrine of the Divine Word. The idea of the sacrament occupies small place in his writings. He attaches great importance to baptism; he contrasts it

* Εἰ μὲν οὖν μετανοοῦντες ἐπὶ τοῖς ἡμαρτημένοις καὶ ἐπιγνόντες τοῦτον εἶναι τὸν Χριστὸν καὶ φυλάσσοντες αὐτοῦ τὰς ἐντολὰς ταῦτα φήσετε ὅτι (ὁ πατὴρ αὐτὸν ἠθέλησε ταῦτα παθεῖν, ἵνα τῷ μώλωπι αὐτοῦ ἴασις γένηται τῷ γένει τῶν ἀνθρώπων), ἄφεσις ὑμῖν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἔσται. ("Dial. cum Tryph.," chap. 95, p. 323.)

† Ibid., chap. 45.

‡ Τοὺς πιστεύοντας ῥύσεται ἐκ θανάτου τὸ αἷμα τοῦ χριστοῦ. (Ibid., chap. 111. p. 338.)

with natural birth, which has a character of necessity, and leaves us in ignorance, while baptism renders us the chosen children of God by the forgiveness of our sins.* But it only produces its glorious results by virtue of a living faith; it bears no resemblance to the Jewish purifications, for all the waters of a flood would not wash away our sins; it purifies us by faith in the crucified Christ. Baptism is only beneficial to a repenting sinner;† then it becomes the source of life, and may well be called illumination, because of the truth which has been taught to the convert, and which it symbolises.‡ Justin does not speak of the baptism of children, but only of their instruction.§ On the Lord's Supper his language is less exact. He seems to suppose a union of the Word with the eucharistic elements, which are no longer ordinary bread and wine. Just as the Word assumed our flesh, so does He become incarnate again in these elements, which, by a sort of transmutation, form food for the soul.‖ Elsewhere, however, Justin insists upon the idea that the Lord's Supper is a memorial of redemption. The bread is offered in memory of the body of Christ, and the wine of His blood.¶ No exact or clear result can be drawn from this mystical language. Justin adopts the principle of an absolute theopneusty in the inspira-

* "Οπως μὴ ἀνάγκης τέκνα μηδὲ ἀγνοίας μένωμεν, ἀλλὰ προαιρέσεως καὶ ἐπιστήμης, ἀφέσεώς τε ἁμαρτιῶν τύχωμεν ἐν τῷ ὕδατι. ("Apol.," i. p. 94.)

† Τοῦτο ἐκεῖνο τὸ σωτήριον λουτρὸν ἠν, ὅ εἶπετο τοῖς μεταγινώσκουσι. ("Dial. cum Tryph.," chap. 13.)

‡ "Apol.," i. p. 94.

§ Οἳ ἐμαθητεύθησαν ἐκ παίδων. (Ibid., ii. p. 62.)

‖ Τὴν δι' εὐχῆς λόγου εὐχαριστηθεῖσαν τροφὴν ἐξ ἧς αἷμα καὶ σάρκες κατὰ μεταβολὴν τρέφονται ἡμῶν, ἐκεινου Ἰησοῦ καὶ σάρκα καὶ αἷμα ἐδιδάχθημεν εἶναι. (Ibid., ii. p. 98.)

¶ Περὶ τοῦ ἄρτου εἰς ἀνάμνησιν τοῦ σωματοποιήσασθαι αὐτὸν, τοῦ ποτήριου εἰς ἀνάμνησιν τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ. ("Dial. cum Tryph.," chap. 70.)

tion of the Scriptures. The prophets received their utterances directly from the Word.* It must not be forgotten, however, that he is speaking only of the Old Testament, and that he holds that particular prophecy closed with Jesus Christ, in whom it found its consummation. Thenceforth it becomes, like the priesthood, a gift common to all Christians. This evidently implies a remarkable extension of inspiration under the New Covenant. To the objection made by Trypho, that if the Christ, according to the prophet Isaiah, was to receive the Holy Spirit, He could not be possessed of the Godhead, which has need of no gift — Justin thus replies: "The gifts of the Spirit are not bestowed on the Word as if they were necessary to Him, but because they were to find their permanent abode in Him, so that no prophet was any more to arise from among men from that time, which is a fact patent to all. The Spirit then rested from His work, at the coming of Him who was to bring to a close the ancient economy for the men of His time. These gifts having thus found their culminating point in Him, are diffused according to the sacred oracles, by the power of the Holy Spirit among all believers, according as they are judged worthy of it. This is the miracle foretold by the prophets when they put into the lips of the glorified Christ the words: "Behold, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy." Justin adds: "Men and women may be seen among us possessing these virtues of the Holy Spirit."† Thus Justin recognises no specific difference

* Τοῦ κινοῦντος αὐτοὺς θείου λόγου. ("Apol.," i. p. 76.)

† Ἀνεπαύσατο οὖν (τὸ πνεῦμα) ἐλθόντος ἐκείνου, ἐν τούτῳ ἀνάπαυσιν

in the inspiration of Christians. He does not depreciate the authority of the apostles. He frequently appeals to their reminiscences or their writings as the basis of his teaching, but he does not claim for them the monopoly of the prophetic gifts, which belong to the whole Church. Nowhere does he refer to any rule of faith, any constituted tradition, nor does he enter in any degree into questions of internal organisation. His conception of the universal priesthood is clearly contrary to the episcopal monarchy, of which he makes no mention. He places Peter and the sons of Zebedee exactly on the same level, in speaking of the surnames given to them by the Master.* The noble confession of Cephas wins for him his glorious name. Justin proclaims the second coming of Jesus Christ to break the power of antichrist, and depicts His reign on earth in the glowing colours of the millenarians. He believes in an earthly Jerusalem, and does not admit the restoration of the Jews.† With the whole ancient Church, he holds that there is an intermediate state, in which souls are placed under the guardianship of a mysterious power; but as he does not ascribe to their sufferings any expiatory virtue, there is a broad gulf between his idea and that of purgatory.‡ The resurrection of the body is presented by him in a purely materialistic sense, very unlike the lofty spirituality of St. Paul. He seems to admit the eternity of suffer-

λαβόντα δόματα ἃ τοῖς ἐπ' αὐτὸν πιστεύουσι δίδωσιν, ὡς ἄξιον ἕκαστον ἐπίστασθαι. Καὶ παρ' ἡμῖν ἐστὶν ἰδεῖν καὶ θηλείας, καὶ ἄρσενας χαρίσματα ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ θεοῦ ἔχοντας. ("Dial. cum Tryph.," ch. 87, p. 315.)

* Ibid., chap. 106, p. 333.

† Ibid., chaps. 80, 81. He acknowledges, however, that upon this point Christians differ.

‡ Ibid., chap. 105.

ing; at least, he uses the Greek term, which gives occasion to so much ambiguity, without any suggestion of a final restoration.*

Such is this system, abounding in contradictions, incomplete, as was to be expected from a first essay at theological elaboration. Neither the idea of God, that of the Word, or of redemption, is apprehended in its true character. Platonist and Jewish elements blend with the immortal truth of the Gospel, and obscure it. It beams forth nevertheless at frequent intervals, like the sun piercing the clouds. The adoration of Christ, as the great centre of religion and the Saviour of the world, throbs and glows in his fervid words. Recollections of the Greek philosophy do not prevent the grand idea of the Divine Word and of His moral affinity with humanity, from shining forth in all its splendour. Moral freedom, the vivifying breath of the system, excludes all pantheistic dualism, and the indefeasible claims of the New Covenant, and of those whom Christ has made free, are maintained with admirable spirituality, notwithstanding the too evident intrusion of a new legalism. Through all his verbosity and forced typology, we recognise the noble martyr whose dying words were: "I am too little to say anything great of Christ!" He felt himself overwhelmed by the Divine truth which he sought to define, and he was the first to consign to the testing fire all the hay and straw that had mingled with the marble and gold in the construction of his system. Justin deserves to occupy an honourable place in this perilous but necessary work of religious science.

* Αἰώνιον πῦρ. ("Apol.," ii. 87.)

§ III. *Athenagoras, Theophilus of Antioch, Tatian.*

The influence of Platonism is more manifest in Athenagoras than in Justin. He also starts from the idea of the ineffable, impassible God, enveloped in light inaccessible.* The Word is the eternal reason of God; He is in the Father and the Father in Him. The Holy Spirit is the Divine Wisdom, the bond of unity between the Father and the Son, who shone in the soul of the prophets as a ray proceeding from the sun. The Godhead thus conceived forms a perfect world.† The Word is inseparable from God, as thought is inseparable from mind.‡ Creation was not, then, a necessity; the world was formed solely by the good pleasure of God and of His free love. This is the truly Christian feature in the system of Athenagoras. The Word was called into distinct existence in order to give organisation to chaotic matter, and to impart to it form and harmony. The universe finds in Him its active principle and idea. Thus he could say: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old."§

The Word possesses, then, an ideal existence, before the creation of the world; but the idea only enters on a complete existence, and becomes an energy, a force, a positive power, at creation. He is not, however, simply the idea of the world, since the world is not

* Αἴδιον ἀόρατον καὶ ἀπαθῆ καὶ ἀκατάληπτον καὶ ἀχώρητον, φωτὶ καὶ κάλλει ἀνεκδιηγήτῳ περιέχομένον. (Athenag., "Leg. pro Christ.," p. 10.)

† Πάντα γὰρ ὁ θεός ἐστιν αὐτὸς αὐτῷ κόσμος τέλειος, πνεῦμα, δύναμις, λόγος. (Ibid., p. 15.)

‡ Ibid., p. 17.

§ Πρῶτον γέννημα εἶναι τῷ πατρὶ, οὐχ ὡς γενόμενον (ἐξ ἀρχῆς γὰρ ὁ θεὸς νοῦς αἴδιος ὢν, εἶχεν αὐτὸς ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὸν λόγον) ἀλλ' ὡς τῶν ὑλικῶν ἰδέα καὶ ἐνέργεια εἶναι προελθών. (Ibid., p. 10.)

necessary to His being; but when God has once determined to create the world, it is He who gives shape to formless matter, and makes it express the thought of God. Of the origin of this formless matter, Athenagoras gives no explanation. He certainly does not identify it with evil, since evil has no existence in primeval creation; but it has, at least, a strong native propensity to sin, for after the angels have been placed in charge of the various spheres of existence, it is the angel of matter who is the first to be led astray, and who entices the world into evil.* Sin consists entirely in sensuality. Thus the doctrine of Athenagoras tends to asceticism, though he keeps it within moderately reasonable limits. He tolerates marriage only for the sake of the multiplication of the race. By a curious contradiction, however, he holds the resurrection of the body in the most material sense.† His views are identical with those of Justin on the subject of idolatry and of the inspiration of the prophets. He absolutely repudiates sacrifices of blood, even under the Jewish covenant, and nowhere gives any theory of redemption.

Theophilus of Antioch establishes a closer relation than Athenagoras between the creation of the world and the external or hypostatic production of the Word. Like his predecessors, he insists upon the incomprehensibility of God, who can never be known in Himself, but only by His works.‡ The great design of the material creation is to reveal God to man, and man himself has been called into existence for the knowledge of God, who, without him, would have been

* "Leg. pro Christ.," p 27.
† Ibid., pp. 42, 43.
‡ Ἀχωρητος. (Theophilus of Antioch, "Contra Antolyc.," p. 71.)

as a ray of light without a reflector.* The Word was, until the time of creation, in the bosom of God, simply in a virtual state. The Father produced Him by His wisdom or His spirit, and made Him His organ for the creation of the world. He is the principle, the beginning of which Moses spoke, when he said: "*In the beginning* God created the heavens and the earth."† He is called also the Wisdom, the Spirit, and by Him the soul of the prophets was illuminated. Such a notion of the Trinity is utterly vague and confused, though the word itself is employed for the first time by Theophilus. All the theophanies since that of the Garden of Eden are ascribed to the Word, who represents the Father, the absolute God, of whom He is ever the eternal reason. Theophilus expressly recognises that the world was created out of nothing. Man is a being truly divine, as is shown by the solemnity of the act of his creation. Before calling him into existence, indeed, God holds converse with the Word, and says: "Let us make man in our likeness."‡ He, like all the world, of which he is the king, came pure from the hands of God, but he afterwards involved the whole in his fall. The ordeal of Eden was not intended to prove his ruin, but, on the contrary, to raise him by obedience to the height of God. Had he obeyed, he would have been declared God, and raised to heaven.§ His rebellion is the sole cause of his present

* Ἠθέλησεν ἄνθρωπον ποιῆσαι ᾧ γνοσθῇ. ("Opera," p. 88.)

† Ἔχων οὖν ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ λόγον ἐνδιάθετον ἐν τοῖς ἰδιοις σπλάγχνοις, ἐγέννησεν αὐτὸν μετὰ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ σοφίας ἐξερευξάμενος πρὸ τῶν ὅλων τοῦτον τὸν λόγον, εἶχεν ὑπουργὸν τῶν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ γεγενημένων · λέγεται ἀρχή, ὧν πνεῦμα θεοῦ. (Ibid., p. 88.)

‡ Ibid., p. 96.

§ Ὅπως τέλειος γενόμενος, ἔτι καὶ θεὸς ἀναδειχθεὶς, οὕτως καὶ εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀναβῇ. (Ibid., p. 101.)

wretchedness. The doctrine of redemption is scarcely indicated; the rejection of idolatry and the practice of good works set us in the way of salvation.* Theophilus of Antioch does not fall into the errors of a false asceticism; he holds that marriage is not to be despised, for in such a case a man pours contempt on his own father and mother.†

We find the Greco-Asiatic school descending rapidly the steep incline which ends in the confusion of the Word with the world. The "Exhortation against the Greeks," by Tatian, who was at first a disciple of Justin, marks a sensible advance in this direction. According to him, God was absolutely alone before the creation of the world. Nevertheless everything existed in Him potentially, things visible as well as invisible; they were latent, so to speak, in the virtual existence of the Word.‡ We are thus brought very near to the Alexandrine idea of emanation. The Word was brought into distinct existence by a positive act of the Divine will.§ He is the first-born of the Spirit, and He becomes the Creator of the world, which He educes from nothing. He is born not by division, but by communication of the essence of the Father. Thus He takes nothing from the Father, as one torch being lighted from another does not diminish the parent flame.‖ Does not the word spoken leave intact the thought of which it is the expression? Tatian allows that matter was created by God, and that consequently it is not identical with evil. He also enunciates, as

* "Opera," p. 110. † Ibid., p. 104.

‡ Τὴν ἀρχὴν λόγου δύναμιν, — σὺν αὐτῷ θεῷ τὰ παντά. ("Contra Græc. orat.," p. 145.) § Θελήματι, p. 145. ‖ Ibid.

plainly as Justin, the doctrine of moral freedom. Nevertheless, matter is ultimately the source from which the evil influence proceeds. This influence fascinates the human soul, which is not of divine race, and by nature immortal;* hence matter will never be restored. From this point to gnostic dualism there was but a step. Conversion is represented as simply a return to good. The creating hides from view the redeeming Word. It is easy to understand that the author of such a system should have readily confounded the moral drama with cosmology. It would be unjust to interpret this as the necessary consequence of Justin's teaching. Tatian brings into prominence its dangerous aspect, without destroying its germs of fruitfulness and beauty.

* "Contra Græc. orat.," p. 152.

CHAPTER III.

THE THEOLOGY OF THE ALEXANDRINE SCHOOL. CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA.*

Our present task is greatly abridged by the full exposition we have already given of the apologetic portion of the theology of Clement and Origen, which is their most lasting title to fame.† The school of Alexandria was devoted primarily to the defence of Christianity. It pleaded this great cause before the tribunal of high culture, and it may be said that it pleaded successfully. Its method may have been long forgotten; it has not grown obsolete. We could not, even in this nineteenth century, find higher or safer ground than its broad and beautiful demonstrations of the deep harmony existing between the Gospel and the spiritual needs of the soul, of the legitimacy of religious assurance founded upon faith, of the preparation for the Gospel carried on amidst all the darkness of paganism. We need not go again over this ground, previously trodden. We have already brought into clear

* Beside the works already quoted, I may mention the book of the Abbé Cognat, upon Clement of Alexandria: "Clément d'Alexandrie, sa doctrine et sa polémique." Paris: Dentu, 1859. The writer there treats almost exclusively of the question of traditionalism

† See "Martyrs and Apologists;" the second volume of this work.

light both the great merit and the grave defect of the Alexandrine theology. It cannot be too highly extolled for the absolute triumph it gains over dualism, by its insistance on the essential harmony existing between the human and the divine, and in a more general manner, between nature and God. But it is nevertheless open to objection for its exaggeration of the intellectual element in the conception of religion, and for its too close adherence to the principles of Platonism. We shall trace this twofold character throughout the whole of the system developed by these illustrious and liberal thinkers.

§ I. *The Theodicy of Clement of Alexandria.*

The idea of God seems at first to be even more purely an abstraction in the mind of Clement than of Justin. Judging only by certain passages in his writings, we should say that he accepts the absolute idealism of the neo-Platonists, and rests in a pure negation. He desires that the Christian Gnostic, who aspires to true knowledge, should not be like ordinary men, whom we see circumscribed by the material, as the snail in his shell, or moved only by their carnal passions, as the hedgehog revolves on his quills.* He wills that the Christian gnostic should free himself from all lower ideas; that he should regard as only figurative those texts of Scripture which speak of God as though, like man, he occupied a particular place, or possessed eyes, arms, and a mouth; as though he had passions

* Clement of Alexandria, "Opera." Leipzig Edition (Schwikert, 1832). "Stromates," vol. v. chap. 11, sec. 69.

like our own, indignation and wrath. Let the Christian gnostic rise till he be initiated into the great divine mystery, leaving beneath him all inferior degrees, and abstracting from being all its material qualities, and in the first place that of dimension. Let him thus attain to the indivisible point; then rising one step higher he shall reach the true* unity, the great first cause, who is above space and time, whom neither word can express nor thought conceive.† It is because God is the absolute Spirit, that He remains inaccessible to all finite beings, and cannot be apprehended in His fulness by those whose intelligence fails to rise above the limitations of time and space. But while Clement thus borrows from Alexandrine Platonism its most emphatic terms, while he calls God the great abyss,‡ the infinite being whom none can attain unto, who has neither gender, differentiality, species, individuality, number, or accident; while he declares that no attribute, however sublime, can fitly set Him forth; that He is the boundless ocean which lies beyond the world; it is nevertheless impossible to him to be satisfied with this pure abstraction, the great unity, inert and void, of Philo. In truth, the first principle is not absolutely incomprehensible, since He does reveal Himself in His fulness to the Word.§ God is then incomprehensible only in a relative sense, as is conveyed in that grand saying of the old poet, quoted by Clement: "I see Him not, for He dwells

* Νοεῖται μονάς. ("Strom.," v. 11, 72.)

† Οὔκουν ἐν τόπῳ τὸ πρῶτον αἴτιον ἀλλ' ὑπεράνω καὶ τόπου καὶ χρόνου καὶ ὀνόματος καὶ νοήσεως. (Ibid., v. 11, 72.)

‡ Βαθύν. (Ibid., v. 12, 82.)

§ Οὐδὲν ἀκατάληπτον τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ θεοῦ. (Ibid., vi. 8, 70.)

above the clouds, and the feeble orbs of human vision cannot pierce into those depths, for we are but flesh and bone." * Nevertheless, we have in our reason an intuition of the Divine being, since that reason is itself a ray of the Word. When the Word reveals Himself fully to us we possess the true knowledge.† Nothing is incomprehensible to the Son of God, nor, through the Son of God, to the Christian gnostic, the man of true knowledge. The Word is not a diminished emanation from God. He is His perfect image; He reproduces Him in His fulness from all eternity. "God, not being in Himself demonstrable, cannot be the object of science. The Son is wisdom, science, truth, and everything of the same order. Thus He is the demonstration and explanation of truth." All the powers of the mind find in Him their centre. He includes them all in the circle of His being. He is the Alpha and Omega, the eternal and universal idea, the One which comprehends the multiples.‡ Evidently the Word is here represented after the manner of Philo, as the ideal world, or rather as the idea of the world, but with this twofold difference, that before He is the idea of the world, He is the idea or the perfect expression of God, and that instead of being a simple idea, or the uniting bond of ideas, as Philo expresses it, He is a personal, living being, the express image of the Father. "Our teacher is like God the Father, of whom He is the Son most holy, free from all stain, free from all passion; the

* "Strom.," v. 12, 79. † Ibid., v. 11, 75.

‡ *Ἀπόδειξιν ἔχει καὶ διέξοδον ἄλφα καὶ ὦμέγα . . . ὡς πάντα ἓν.* (Ibid., iv. 25, 158, 159.)

God-Word, who is in the Father, at the right hand of God, truly in the form of God." * This resemblance of the Son to the Father is complete. "Of all natures the most perfect, the most holy, the most sovereign, mighty, royal, beneficent, the nearest to the Most High, is that of the Son."† He has ordered all things according to the will of the Father, and He governs the universe with excellent wisdom. He does all things with untiring and ever effectual power, His gaze being fixed on the depths of the divine. The Son of God never removes from His absolutely indivisible centre; He does not go from place to place; He is everywhere at once, free from all the limitations of space. He is all spirit, all divine light, all eye,‡ seeing all, hearing and knowing all, penetrating all force by His higher force. The host of angels and of gods obeys this Word of the Father, who has only assumed this universal sovereignty in the name of Him who has committed it to Him.§ "The Word shares in the divine eternity, for the Father is not without the Son."‖ He it is by whom the world was created.¶ He was the first begotten; He had no beginning, and He reveals the cause anterior to all others, the most beneficent of all, whom no lips dare name, but who is worshipped in sacred silence, in the holy awe of adoration.** The Word of the Creator of all things is not only His

* Ἔοικεν τῷ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ τῷ θεῷ οὗπερ ἐστὶν υἱὸς ἀναμάρτητος λόγος θεὸς, ὁ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ, ὁ ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ πατρός. ("Pædag.," i. 2, 4.)

† Τελειωτάτη δὴ καὶ ἁγωτάτη καὶ κυριωτάτη ἡ υἱοῦ φύσις ἡ τῷ μόνῳ παντοκράτορι προσεχεστάτη. ("Strom.," vii. 2, 5.)

‡ Ὅλος νοῦς, ὅλος φῶς πατρῷον, ὅλος ὀφθαλμός. (Ibid., vii. 2, 5.)

§ Διὰ τὸν ὑποτάξαντα. (Ibid., vii. 2, 5.)

‖ Οὐδὲ ὁ πατὴρ ἄνευ υἱοῦ. (Ibid., v. 1, 1.)

¶ Δημιουργιας αἴτιος. (Ibid., v. 3, 16.)

** Ibid., vii. 1, 2.

outward expression; He is the wisdom and goodness of God in their full manifestation, a truly divine power, universally intelligible, the supreme will.* To know Him is to know the truth by the truth.†

We see to what a height Clement raises the Word, while still maintaining His subordination as having been begotten of the Father. Nevertheless, He has a distinct personal existence from all eternity. The transcendent attributes belong to Him as to the Father. We inquire in what then is He distinguished from the Father? How is He less ineffable, less incomprehensible? Clement has some perception of the answer when he says that the Father cannot be without the Son, and when He regards the Word as the perfect expression of the Divine goodness.

It was needful to go further, and show that the Word must be in truth from all eternity the object of the love of the Father, if the Father was absolute love. Thus the distinction of persons was finally obtained. But Clement is satisfied with affirming the perfect resemblance of the Word with the Father. He does not give us a sufficient reason for His distinct existence, for he does not show how He is not to be confounded with Him whose exact image He bears. He does not raise a rampart against Sabellianism, at least from a logical point of view.

Let us acknowledge, nevertheless, that Clement gave life and warmth to the Alexandrine abstractions by his broad conception of the love of God. This he makes

* "Strom.," v. 1, 6.

† Γνῶσις δὲ υἱοῦ διαληψίς ἐστιν ἀληθείας διὰ τῆς ἀληθείας. (Ibid., v. 1, 1.)

the essential attribute of the Godhead. He does not hesitate to identify goodness with God. "God," he says, "is by nature good;* before the creation He was God, that is, He was good."† He is not only good, as He is just and wise, or as He possesses other perfections. Love is His very being. "Goodness in Him is not a mere virtue; it is not one of the qualities of righteousness; no, the essence of His righteousness is goodness.‡ God is good in Himself; He is just towards us because of His goodness."§ Clement endeavours to establish, in opposition to the gnostics, this identity of righteousness with love. "Righteousness is good," he says, "and goodness is righteous."‖ He traces the love of God even in His sternest dealings. If He strikes or threatens the sinner, it is to bring him to repentance. He alarms, that He may not be constrained to punish. Chastisement is the sharp touch that awakens out of a deathly sleep. Goodness implies hatred of the vice which is our ruin; it punishes the sinner, but the punishment is always for the good of the guilty one, for it tends to his restoration.¶ God never takes vengeance; that which we call His vengeance is His chastisement for evil committed, and its sole end is the recovery of the sinner on whom it is

* *Φύσει ἀγαθὸς θεός.* ("Pædag.," i. 9, 82.)

† *Πρὶν γὰρ κτίσιν γενέσθαι θεὸς ἦν, ἀγαθὸς ἦν.* (Ibid., i. 9, 88.)

‡ Ibid., i. 8, 63.

§ *Ὥστε ἀγαθὸς μὲν ὁ θεὸς δι' ἑαυτὸν δίκαιος τε ἤδη δι' ἡμᾶς, καὶ τοῦτο ὅτι ἀγαθός.* (Ibid., i. 9, 88.)

‖ *Ἀγαθὴ γὰρ ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνη καὶ δικαία ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγαθότης αὐτοῦ.* ("Strom.," vi. 14, 109.)

¶ *Τιμωρια δέ ἐστιν ἀνταπόδοσις κακοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ τοῦ τιμωρουῦντος συμφέρον ἀναπεμπομένη.* ("Pædag.," i. 8, 70.) See the whole of this beautiful chapter and the following.

inflicted. How could the God who has commanded us to pray for our enemies be Himself an avenging God? His wrath and His mercy both tend to the same end—the salvation of men.* A warning, moreover, is not a message of wrath.† In the eleventh chapter of the first book of the "Pedagogue," Clement shows His merciful righteousness in operation, seeking the salvation of the sinner. Whether it warns or wounds, its remedies are proportioned to the gravity of the evil, and He only makes them more severe in order that they may be more efficacious. Chastening is the fan which separates the chaff in us from the pure wheat. It is also the hammer and anvil by means of which the heart of man is broken under the hand of God. The curse itself coming from His lips is changed into a means of help and healing.‡ Thus God always assigns a curative virtue to His rebukes. Clement does not fail, however, to acknowledge that evil necessarily produces suffering, and that the wicked man who hardens his heart is lost. All the efforts to deliver us from the power of sin which he ascribes to Divine love, imply the gravity of the evil. "Every one of us," he says, "in choosing evil, chooses his own misery."§ It would be unjust, then, to ascribe to Clement such a low conception of the Divine goodness, as would in fact transform it into indifference to good or evil. If sorrow follows sin, it is because the Most High has so willed it, for nothing escapes His power. It is He who has estab-

* Ἐλέους γὰρ καὶ ἐλέγχου σκοπὸς ἡ τῶν ἐλεγχομένων σωτηρία. ("Pædag.," i. 8, 72.)

† Ibid., 10, 94.

‡ Φαρμακείᾳ ἔοικεν ὁ ὀνειδισμός. (Ibid., i. 8, 65.)

§ Αἱρεῖται δὲ ἕκαστος ἡμῶν τὰς τιμωρίας αὐτὸς ἑκὼν ἁμαρτάνων. (Ibid., i. 8, 69.)

lished the connection between sin and suffering. His correction, however, is administered without anger, for the Divine Being is a stranger to wrath.* This characteristic Clement describes as His *apatheia*, the absence, that is, of all passion.† But this Divine apathy is compatible with ardent love for the fallen creature, and the woe, which was primarily the mere result of sin, becomes a merciful means of restoration, the goad which pierces the heart to drive it back to God. All that Clement says of the Father applies equally to the Son, who is in all respects like unto Him. We shall see what are the consequences relating to the doctrine of redemption, which he draws from this sublime but incomplete theodicy. Clement himself thus epitomises them: "God is love. While He is the ineffable Father, His sympathy with us is that of a mother; so that in loving us, the Father assumes something of the feminine nature."‡ Such a presentation of God as this is far enough removed from the abstract unity of Gnosticism, which some have declared to be the true idea of Clement's theodicy.§ With reference to the Holy Spirit, Clement speaks with the utmost vagueness. "O glorious mystery!" he exclaims: "the Father of all beings is One, the

* Οὐκ ὀργίζεται τὸ θεῖον. ("Pædag.," i. 8, 68.)

† Θεὸς γὰρ ἀπαθής. ("Strom.," vi. 16, 137.)

‡ Ἔστι δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ θεὸς ἀγάπη· τὸ μὲν ἄῤῥητον αὐτοῦ πατὴρ, τὸ δὲ ἡμῖν συμπαθὲς γέγονε μήτηρ. ("De div. serv.," 37.)

§ See Baur, "Dreieinigkeit," i. 192, 193; "Die Christliche Gnosis," 512. Baur is wrong in his assertion that the God of Clement can only become a reality by means of a series of necessary media. The doctrine of the Word in the writings of this Father has no analogy with the emanations. When he speaks of the Hebdomas and Ogdoas, he is using symbolical language. ("Strom.," vi. 16; vii. 10.

universal Word is One, and One likewise is the Holy Spirit!"* The distinction between the second and third persons of the Trinity is, with him, very vague and variable, as is shown by the following text: "The Word is the Spirit made flesh."† The doctrine of the Trinity is not more fully developed in the writings of Clement than of his predecessors. He repeats the formula of baptism, but in common with all the theologians of his age, his doctrine is widely removed from that of Nicæa.

§ II. *Creation and Redemption.*

The creation, the work of the Father and the Son, is a manifestation of the divine love. Created existence has, as its principle, a free act of the eternal goodness. It is because God is good that He chose to become the Creator, that is, the Father.‡ The Word is the central idea or the idea of the universe, — a living, acting idea, which calls forth the universe from nothing.§ Before the creation of the world time was not, for time is the mode of life of created beings.‖ It follows that the world is not eternal, that it has not always existed. Clement declares distinctly that God was good in Himself before creation.¶ Creation

* "Pædag.," i. 6, 42.

† Ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ πνεῦμα σαρκοῦμενον. (Ibid., i. 6, 43.)

‡ Ἀγαθὸς ἦν καὶ διὰ τοῦτο καὶ δημιουργος εἶναι καὶ πατὴρ ἠθέλησεν. (Ibid., i. 9, 88.)

§ "Strom.," iv. 25, 168.

‖ Πῶς δ' ἂν χρόνῳ γένοιτο κτίσις, συγγενομένου τοῖς οὖσι καὶ τοῦ χρονοῦ. (Ibid., vi. 16, 142.)

¶ Πρὶν κτίσιν γενέσθαι. ("Pædag.," i. 9, 88.) Mœller ("Gesch. der Cosmogon.," p. 511) has passed over this important text in his exposition of the doctrine of Clement regarding creation, and has thus been led to attribute to him the idea of an eternal creation.

is a harmonious symphony of which the Word is the Chorægus.* One being above all others upon earth was the object of this kindness of heaven. That being was man, who may be regarded as the end, the goal, the idea of creation.† He is filled with the light of the Word; his higher life is, as it were, a breath of the divine life;‡ and thus the God who has so highly endowed him is called, with reason, the Divine Friend of man.§ It is upon this spiritual relationship between humanity and the Word, that Clement founds his whole demonstration of Christianity, of which we have given the outline. He is careful to avoid any approach to pantheism, declaring that man is not a part of the Deity, and is not consubstantial with Him. The only affinity between him and God is a purely spiritual one, which belongs to him only by the merciful kindness of the Creator. No finite being can in truth be regarded as a fraction of or emanation from the Divinity.‖ The divine element is imparted to him with the moral life, by the Word. Liberty is the natural appanage of a being made in the likeness of God. The will is the inner spring on which all depends, and primarily the intelligence and reasoning faculties.¶ The prescience of God is not predestination. The Word knew well who would be disobedient; obedience, nevertheless, is within our power. Grace

* "Protrept.," i. 5.

† Man is the lyre of the universal harmony. He is the temple of God (*κιθάρα, ναός*). (Ibid., i. 8.)

‡ *Ἔμφύσημα λέγεται θεοῦ.* ("Pædag.," i. 3, 7.)

§ *Φιλάνθρωπον.* ("Protrept.," i. 6.)

‖ "Strom.," 16, 74.

¶ *Αἱ γὰρ λογικαὶ δυνάμεις οὐ βούλεσθαι διάκονοι πεφύκασι.* (Ibid., ii. 17, 77.)

and free-will, in fact, coincide. The spiritual exercise which is to produce temperance is enjoined upon us, although temperance itself be a divine gift. * Clement strongly opposes the fatalistic gnosticism which made the salvation of perfect men depend upon an arbitrary election of God, as though they had been formed of purer clay than the rest of mankind. Faith in such a system is no longer the highest fulfilment of our destiny; it becomes a privilege conferred by nature, and unbelief ceases to be a thing for which men can be held accountable. We are then only machines moved by our appetites as by a system of wheels. "What a mere animal I am then!" exclaims the noble thinker. "Where is the room for repentance, for the goodness of God and His Word, for the whole work of salvation?"†

Evil is not then a necessary consequence of creation; it is not an essential and primordial thing, like matter; it is only an accident, the result of the estrangement of the will, and cannot be regarded as in any degree the work of God.‡ According to this fundamental principle, evil in all the spheres of existence proceeds from the rebellion of the creature. The demons were not by nature spirits of evil; they became so; they are angels fallen. Clement shared in the opinions of his age as to the extraordinary power of the angels. He speaks of them as the rulers of provinces, appointed to the administration of the various parts of the uni-

* Ἄθλον βαρὺ, δῶρον τοῦ θεοῦ μέγιστον σωφροσύνη. ("Strom.," ii. 20, 126.)

† Ibid., ii. 3, 11.

‡ Τὸ ἁμαρτάνειν ἐνεργείᾳ κεῖται οὐκ οὐσίᾳ, διὸ οὐδὲ ἔργον θεοῦ. (Ibid., iv. 13, 95.)

verse.* Some of them have fallen in love with the daughters of men, and have revealed to them the divine mysteries.† Others howl in the air, as evil genii, and call for bloody sacrifices. Paganism has derived from them at once the fragment of truth which it has preserved, and its barbarous sanguinary ritual. Clement attributes, however, a simply human origin to many of the gods of Olympus.‡ He does not really give to the doctrine of demons the importance which was attached to it by Justin before, and by Origen after him. He accepts the current idea, but does not dwell much upon it;§ and does not, like some other Fathers, make it one of the fundamental points of the doctrine of the Fall and of redemption.

The Fall is ascribed by Clement to pride rather than to selfishness. He sees in the serpent which crawls upon the earth the symbol of the carnal inclination.‖ Sin is in every man,¶ and yet our nature cannot be said to be absolutely corrupt, because it has the Word shining within and giving it light. He denounces emphatically the idea that a child just born can be liable to the slightest chastisement. "Wherein," he says, "has such a child sinned? How can it, having itself done nothing, be brought under the condemnation of Adam?"** Clement acknowledges, however, that man, being once fallen, has no power to raise himself.

* Κατά τε γὰρ τὰ ἔθνη καὶ πόλεις νενέμηνται τῶν ἀγγέλων αἱ προστασίαι. ("Strom.," vi. 17, 157.)

† Ibid., v. 1, 10.

‡ "Protrept.," ii. 40.

§ Ibid., iii. 44, 45.

‖ Ὄφις ἀλληγορεῖται ἡδονή. (Ibid., xi. 111.)

¶ Τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἐξαμαρτάνειν πᾶσιν ἔμφυτον καὶ κοινὸν. ("Pædag.," iii. 12, 93.)

** Ποῦ ἐτόρνευσεν τὸ γεννηθὲν παιδίον; ἢ πῶς ὑπὸ τὴν τοῦ Ἀδὰμ ὑποπέπτωκεν ἀρὰν τὸ μηθὲν ἐνεργῆσαν. ("Strom.," iii. 16, 100.)

Religious history is not in his view a mere evolution — a progressive development, but a restoration. Human nature could never bloom again but for the coming of Jesus Christ.* Jesus is indeed the very Word incarnate; His was not a merely partial possession of the Word, like that of other men, who have all a ray of the uncreated light; He possessed it in its plenitude, in its totality. Truth has been torn to pieces by heresies, as the body of Pentheus by the worshippers of Bacchus. It finds its unity only in Jesus, for He is the perfect Word.† He who took upon Him a nature like our own is the very Son of God: His Word, His wisdom, the Saviour and Lord of all.‡ He assumed the form of a servant, in order to conform to the conditions of our life. Doubtless, by the power of the divine virtue which was in Him, He could emancipate Himself from the necessities of ordinary physical life,§ but this was a triumph of His liberty, which in no way impaired the reality of that life in Him. Clement had too decidedly repudiated Platonistic dualism to fall into docetism, which moreover he positively repudiates in the somewhat paradoxical passage we have just quoted, which certainly does detract something from the perfect humanity of the Saviour. When he says that Jesus came under the mask of corporeal humanity, to play His part in the drama of our redemption,‖ he only uses these words

* "Strom.," v. 1, 3.

† Ibid., i. 13, 57.

‡ Δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ υἱὸς ἀρχιτώτατος λόγος τοῦ πατρὸς, ὅς γε καὶ τὴν σάρκα τὴν ἐμπαθῆ φύσει γενομένην ἀναλαβὼν εἰς ἕξιν ἀπαθείας ἐπαίδευσεν. (Ibid., vii. 2, 7.)

§ Ἔραγεν γὰρ οὐ διὰ τὸ σῶμα δυνάμει συν χόμενον ἀγίᾳ. (Ibid., vi. 9, 71.)

‖ Τὸ ἀνθρώπου προσωπεῖον ἀναλαβών. ("Protrept.," x. 110.)

as a vivid figure, not implying in them any of the favourite doctrines of gnosticism. The sufferings of the Redeemer were not apparent only but real, for He had assumed a body like our own, and truly shed His blood upon the Cross. "Believe," he says, "in the living God, who has suffered; believe in Him who has died."* "The Son of Man," he said elsewhere, "came not be ministered unto, but to minister. He knew what it was to be weary. He gave His life a ransom for many, and called Himself our brother."† Clement does not appear to have recognised in Jesus a humanity distinct from the Word. Humanity is so closely related to the Word, that it needs only to be raised to a state of perfection in order to be truly divine.

From Clement's point of view redemption cannot be an expiation. He does not admit that God punishes, except with a view to heal and save. If suffering follows sin, it is by a natural sequence; but let the actual evil cease, and the suffering will at once cease with it. There is no debt to pay, no reparation to offer to God, who waits only for the repentance of the guilty before reinstating him in his original condition. Pardon is not even a fresh act, on which He decides of His own free will. It is, in a manner, a necessary consequence of the love which is the very essence of the Godhead, although the right to forgive sins belongs to God alone. The necessity or room for sacrifice is entirely ignored. Like his predecessors,

* Πίστευσον τῷ παθόντι θεῷ. ("Protrept.," x. 106.) See, on this delicate point, Dorner, work quoted, vol. i. pp. 459-461.

† "Pædag.," i. 9, 85.

Clement altogether misapprehends the deep meaning of the Mosaic institutions. Like Philo, he regards them only as types of the cosmogony. The various adornments of the flowing robe of the high priest are the emblems of the heavenly phenomena. The altar of incense, placed between the first and second veil, is the symbol of the earth occupying the centre of the world. The sanctuary represents the intermediate region between heaven and earth. The candlestick with the seven branches is the image of the seven celestial luminaries. The entering of the high priest into the holy of holies, symbolises the initiation of the purified soul into the mysteries of the Word. This latter figure, although belonging to a higer order than those preceding, does not reach the idea of redemption. The sacrifices express the consecration of our soul to God, and not the deep need of an expiation. "The sacrifices, according to the law," he says, "symbolise the piety which is incumbent upon us."* The offering of goats and of doves for sin, represents that purification of the irrational part of the soul which renders it agreeable to God.

Everything turns then on moral purification, without our having to offer any expiation for the past. If the sacrifices under the Mosaic economy express nothing more than the return to holiness, then the great sacrifice of Calvary can have no other purpose than to bring us back to good. This is, in truth, the essential work of Jesus Christ. Clement admits that it became Him to achieve the victory over sin and death by His suffer-

* *Αἱ μὲν γὰρ κατὰ τὸν νόμον θυσίαι τὴν περὶ ἡμᾶς εὐσέβειαν ἀλληγοροῦσι.* ("Strom.," vii. 6, 32.)

ings, but he offers no sufficient explanation of those sufferings. "The Lord," he says, "came to break the bonds which held man captive. He was the incarnation of the divine mystery; He thus bruised the serpent's head, and led into captivity the tyrant death. Marvel of marvels! By those hands nailed to the accursed tree, He sets free the man who is devoted to sinful pleasure, the slave of pollution and sin. O, glorious mystery! The Lord sinks and man rises; he who had been driven from paradise receives the highest reward of obedience, even heaven itself." * The sufferings of Christ had then some positive value; the cross is not the simple declaration of pardon, it is a victory. When the texts are pressed, however, while they mark the recognition on the part of their author of the mystery which is at the basis of the redeeming act, they yield nothing at all approaching the idea of an expiatory sacrifice.

The Word incarnate is primarily the perfect legislator, whose sovereign power is exerted over the soul which He has made in His own likeness, and, as it were, of His own substance: this He purifies and delivers from evil. Justification is entirely confounded with purification. Thus, no clear line of demarcation can be traced in the writings of Clement, any more than in those of Justin, between the two economies. The Word was the angel of the Old Covenant, under a veil of severity, but of a severity full of mercy. This veil is taken away in the Gospel. The work then is one and the same, the difference is one of degree merely. Moses,

* Ὦ θαύματος μυστικοῦ· κέκλιται μὲν ὁ κυρίος, ἀνέστη δὲ ἄνθρωπος. ("Protrept.," xi. 111.)

under the inspiration of the Word, brought souls back to that which is good by instruction and by chastisement. He also was thus a good shepherd, leading men to virtue, and fanning to a flame the almost extinct spark in their souls.* Did Jesus do anything else? If the power He displayed was incomparable, this was because He was the Word incarnate, who had perfect knowledge of the true good. A divine legislator, He promulgated the law which saves.† The law has the same end in view as the Gospel; it corrects us by chastisement, and places us under the authority of God. The Gospel completes the work commenced, inspiring us with the fear of offending the heavenly Father. Love is the complement of holiness. At this exalted degree of virtue we are the sons of God; love covers our sins, and we are judged worthy to be admitted into the heavenly kingdom.‡ God's will is that man should become God.§

Thus salvation still appears as the reward of reacquired holiness. The part of Jesus in this work of purification is very clearly defined in the following passage: "In the present life we are the unhealthy victims of depraved desires and infamous lusts: inflamed with a thousand passions, we have need of a Saviour. The Saviour sent to us is the bearer, not only of pleasant but of painful remedies. Fear is a salutary influence, bitter as it is. As diseased creatures, we need a physician; as wanderers, we need a leader;

* "Strom.," i. 26, 168.

† Τὸ *σωτήριον πρόσταγμα.* (Ibid., i. 26, 169.)

‡ Ibid., i. 27, 173.

§ *Θεὸς δὲ ἐκεῖνος ὁ ἄνθρωπος γίνεται ὅτι βούλεται ὁ θεός.* ("Pædag.," iii. 1, 1.)

as blind, we want one to give us light; as perishing of thirst, we need the living spring of which, if a man drink, he thirsts no more; as dead, we require life. The sheep look for the shepherd, the children for one who shall teach them aright. Yes, all mankind cries aloud for Jesus,* that its sins and wanderings may not issue in final condemnation; but that, delivered by Him from the pollution of sin, men may be gathered into the heavenly garner." "Every man will be judged by his works." † Salvation thus understood is simply conversion wrought in us by the Word.

When Clement uses the term *ransom*, or when he says that the Word by His crown of thorns bare upon His head all our crimes, and delivered us from them, these are only figures which he borrows from Bible language.‡ The general principles of his system forbid us to attach the sense of a more modern orthodoxy to the following passage: "Jesus died as the victim of the most fearful of human crimes. He bore it upon Him, and by His very agony overcame death and the devil." §

There is, however, one text of Clement which goes beyond his general point of view. He puts into the mouth of Jesus these touching words as addressed to the sinner: "I am the master of heavenly wisdom; I have wrestled with death for thee. I have abolished that death which was thy due, on account of thy sins and

* Πᾶσα ἡ ἀνθρωπότης δεόμεθα Ἰησοῦ, ἵνα μὴ ἀναγωγοι καὶ ἁμαρτωλοὶ εἰς τέλος τῇ καταδίκῃ ἐμπέσωμεν, διακριθῶμεν δὲ τῶν ἀχυρμιῶν καὶ εἰς τὴν πατρῴαν ἀποθήκην σωρευθῶμεν. ("Pædag.," i. 9, 83.)

† Ibid., i. 8, 71. ‡ Ibid., ii. 8, 74.

§ Πονηρά does not here signify the punishment of sin, but sin itself.

unbelief."* We have seen that Clement always regards suffering as the offspring of sin. Jesus, in dying, has overcome sin, and hence also death, which is the consequence of sin. But between this general idea and the payment of a debt to God, involving the endurance of His direct curse, there is a wide interval; that gulf is not and could not be bridged over by the system we have set forth.

This theory of redemption does not give an adequate account either of the texts of Scripture or of the deep needs of the human soul. The revelation of Scripture, like that of conscience, demands a reparation which should be made by the representative of man. This divine reparation brings pardon, and is the basis of holiness, the latter being realised by the progressive appropriation of an already finished salvation. The sinner, who casts himself at the foot of the cross, is raised again justified by the work of Christ, which he has accepted and ratified. Grasped by faith, that work becomes to him a treasury of grace, from which he can draw fresh supplies day by day. Clement is satisfied with making salvation contingent on amelioration, on the fulfilment of the divine law, as that was revealed by Jesus Christ, while attaching great importance to His victory over death and to the aid given us by Him. He does not succeed, however, in placing in this way the restoration of man on an immovable basis. He carefully distinguishes between sins committed before and after repentance. The first repentance obtains the forgiveness of sins, because it is a purifying principle.†

* Τὸν σὸν ἐξέτισα θάνατον ὃν ὤφειλες. ("De div. serv.," 23.)

† Μετάνοια ἡ καθαίρουσα τὸν τόπον τῆς ψυχῆς. ("Strom.," ii. 13, 56.)

The second repentance, which is caused by the falls of the believer, cannot claim directly a part in the remission of sins proclaimed by baptism.* Clement does not explain himself very clearly as to this difference, but it is plain that he regards the work of Christ as not sufficient of itself in all cases, and that he deems something more to be necessary than the remission of sins. Repentance thus defined approaches very nearly to penitence possessing more or less of expiatory virtue. The faults committed after baptism are excluded from the scope of the forgiveness granted in the name of Christ at the time of first repentance; they must be atoned for by the endurance of chastisement.† From this there results logically the necessity of a painful and gradual purification, which may be prolonged even beyond the present life, in order to raise us by slow degrees to that perfect holiness which is confounded with salvation. "When we read in the Scripture," says Clement, "'Thy faith hath saved thee;' we do not understand these words to mean that we are saved by any faith whatsoever that is not followed by works." These words, moreover, were addressed only to Jews, who were living irreproachably according to the law, and to whom faith in the Saviour was the one thing lacking. "When thou shalt have quitted this body thou must needs put away all the passions which animated it, before thou canst enter the abode prepared for thee; for to know is more than to believe, and to be judged worthy of the highest honours of heaven is more than simply to be saved. The faithful Christian who, by means of severe discipline, has subdued his

* "Strom.," ii. 13, 58. † "De div. serv.," 39.

passions, undergoes in a higher stage of being heavier chastisement.* He experiences the special repentance which follows on sins committed after baptism. He grieves not to have yet attained, or to be incapable of ever attaining, the high degree of perfection in which he sees his brethren." Heaven is a spiritual hierarchy, in which every man takes his place according to his deserts.†

§ III. *Christian Morals. Authority. The Doctrine of the Church and of the Sacraments. The closing Dispensation.*

Errors in the conception of redemption generally find their counterpart in other spheres of theology. It is not possible to revert to Jewish legalism, with regard to the relation of man to God, without returning more or less to sacerdotal principles, and sacrificing Christian liberty; for the characteristic institutions of the Old Covenant are all based on the peculiar condition of man prior to redemption, when the way of free access to the Father was not yet opened to him. In precisely the same measure in which the old barrier is raised again between man and God, and salvation is shorn of its freeness, is man brought again into bondage, or rather placed afresh under the yoke of those religious forms, the design of which was to impress upon his mind the distance which divided him from heaven. Thus it is we find the distinction of men and of days reintro-

* Ὁ πιστὸς μέτεισιν ἐπὶ τὴν βελτίονα τῆς προτέρας μονῆς μεγίστην κόλασιν. ("Strom.," vi. 14, 109.)

† Ibid., vi. 13, 106.

duced into the very midst of the Christianity of our own days. The sanctuary is rebuilt; the spiritual life is placed under the yoke of a minute ritualism; and an attempt is made to renew the expiatory sacrifice in the celebration of the Lord's Supper itself. How is it, then, that we see Clement of Alexandria standing steadfast upon the heights of Christian spirituality, without taking one backward step, though he had thus enfeebled the conception of redemption? We account for it on this ground; that he made the love of God the very heart and centre of his doctrine, in such a way as few theologians have done since. Doubtless he failed to show the harmony between this infinite love and absolute holiness. This is the failure in his system, and we do not attempt to disguise its importance; nay, we hold that his errors on this essential point, neutralised as they were in his own teaching by the pure and generous current of his leading thought, have nevertheless had a melancholy effect upon the Church, and have done much to bring it back into the bondage of Jewish institutions. Clement himself, however, as the illustrious head of the Alexandrian school, was exempt from any such tendency. The idea of God entertained by him is indeed widely different from that of Mosaism; it must even be acknowledged that he failed to perceive the true intention of that dispensation. He idealised and transformed Judaism, instead of recognising that which was its true basis—I mean that conception of justice so deeply graven on the conscience; for he makes justice vanish into love. By a path, however, which is not the true one, because it is not sprinkled with the blood of a truly

atoning sacrifice, he arrives at the same result as the Gospel, the full reconciliation of man with God by the incarnate Word; and he derives from it all the consequences which Paul had deduced, with a logic never since surpassed.

There is no trace in the teaching of Clement of that dualism or of that opposition between the human and divine element, which is the parent in morals of asceticism and casuistry, and which gives the predominance to ritualism in the religious life; neither does his doctrine tend to sacramental materialism, nor give any impulse to a purely external authority. We have seen him, in his apology for Christianity, denying the existence of any opposition between faith and reason, and showing how they meet and harmonise in the Word. Nature and grace are never exhibited in his system as radically opposed, for man is made for God; he is divine in the essence of his being. Perfection is not beyond or above humanity: it is the complete realisation of man's destiny. It follows that Christian morality must be profoundly human; that it cannot require the sacrifice of any element of our true nature; and that it will issue in the union of our soul with God and with His Word. The great moral principle of Clement, that which includes all precepts, is this: "Be ye imitators of God."* Now, God is to Clement supreme love, free from all passion. This, then, is the ideal proposed to the Christian. The true Christian whom Clement calls the gnostic—that is to say, one who is raised to that perfect knowledge which cannot be distinguished from love—reflects this sublime *apatheia*.

* Θεὸν χρὴ μιμεῖσθαι. ("Strom., iv. 26, 173.)

He desires no reward, not even heaven.* By this perfection to which he is gradually elevated, he is transformed into the likeness of the Word, who is Himself the glorious image of the Father. "The only Son, the type of the Father's glory, of the supreme, most high God, impressed His image on the soul of the gnostic by pure contemplation. Thus his soul becomes, as it were, the third reflex of the divine life."†

All Christian morality consists in the imitation of God, which is rendered possible to us by the help of the Word. Its first duty is piety, properly so called; that is, mystic union with God—contemplation. It then teaches us to glorify Him by a well-regulated activity in the various spheres of life. The perfect Christian, or the gnostic, has intercourse with God by the Great High Priest, and he cultivates as far as possible likeness to the Lord, by his piety, which impels him to labour for the salvation of men.‡

The numerous details into which Clement enters, upon the Christian's manner of life, have no analogy with a rigid ritualism. They are the manifold applications of one principle, ever maintaining its inflexible unity. He does not recognise two codes of morality, the one for ordinary life, the other for a life of perfection. "The morality of Christ," he says, with a wealth of wit, "does not sing above the key."§ It requires only that which may be demanded strictly

* "Strom.," iv. 22, 139, 140.
† Ὡς εἶναι τρίτην ἤδη τὴν θείαν εἰκόνα. (Ibid., vii. 3, 16.)
‡ Ibid., vii. 3, 13.
§ Οὐχ ὡς ὑπέρτονον. (Ibid., ii. 20, 123.)

of all those who consent to bear Christ's yoke. The "counsels of perfection" are thus expressly excluded. Nor does Clement sanction one moral code for the Church and another for the world; neither evil nor good changes its character by changing surroundings. The soul is not to resemble a polypus, which takes the colour of the stones on to which it fixes itself.* The simple and ignorant in the Church are not bound to a less rigorous holiness than those who are versed in religious knowledge. Love is not a thing acquired by science; it is a divine seal, which may be set upon all hearts.† The entire life of each Christian ought to bear its impress.‡

Clement does not place a bar upon any calling or condition in life. He declares plainly that diligent attention to public affairs is compatible with devotion to divine wisdom. § The gnostic, if he attains to a position of eminence in the state, will devote himself unreservedly to the general good. He is another Moses, marching at the head of the people for their common salvation.‖ The affairs of the world or of ordinary life can be conducted honourably, and in the spirit of God.¶ From this point of view, marriage is not a state of inferiority. Clement vindicates its dignity with equal poetry and purity, when he applies to father, mother, and child, the promise of Jesus: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."** Children

* "Pædag.," iii. 11, 80. † Ibid., iii. 11, 78. ‡ Ibid., iii. 11, 80.
§ Ἀλλὰ καὶ πολιτεύσασθαι ἐξόν. (Ibid., iii. 11, 78.)
‖ "Strom.," vii. 3, 16.
¶ Τὰ ἐν κόσμῳ κυσμίως κατὰ θεὸν ἀπάγειν οὐ κεκώλυται. ("Pædag.," iii. 11, 78.)
** "Strom.," iii. 10, 68.

are compared to flowers, which the Divine Gardener gathers in living fields.* Much moderation is no doubt necessary in all that relates to the life of the senses, but the sanctity of the family is openly avowed, and even extolled. Incontinence is a sin, not marriage.† Let us not be more modest than the Creator, who has appointed the preservation of the human species by this means. Clement makes no exception in the case of bishops. He appeals to the apostolic precept, according to which the bishop, before being promoted to his office, should be prepared for the government of the Church by the charge of the family.‡ Marriage, no less than virginity, has its ministry and its work appointed by the Lord, namely, the care of the woman and children.§ The father is the providence of the house. Second marriages are allowed in the spirit of St. Paul.‖ Clement is naturally led to reject extreme asceticism by his doctrine of the creation. The corporeal element comes from God; it is not then evil in itself. The flesh which must be mortified is not simply the physical part of our nature; it is all that is evil and defiled by sin. In his paraphrase of Romans vii., Clement shows that if our body is too often the tomb of the soul, it is none the less designed to be the temple of the Spirit,¶ and he urges the gnostic to make it a sanctuary by temperance and consecration to God. The Christian has a right to

* Ἄνθη δὲ τοῦ γάμου τὰ τέκνα. ("Pædag.," ii. 8, 71.)

† "Strom.," iii. 12, 86.

‡ Ibid., iii. 12, 79.

§ Ἔχει γὰρ ὥσπερ ἡ εὐνουχία οὕτω καὶ ὁ γάμος ἰδίας λειτουργείας καὶ διακονίας. ("Strom.," iii. 12, 79.) See also on this same subject, "Pædag.," ii. 10, 11.

‖ "Strom.," iii. 1, 4.

¶ Ibid., iii. 11, 77.

admire the beauty of the outer world, provided he does not become absorbed in it, and fall into an idolatrous worship of the beautiful, like the Grecians, but seeks in it the glory of the Creator.* Poverty has no more merit in itself than celibacy. Sin does not consist in possessing but in abusing.† The treatise entitled, "How the rich man can be saved," gives expansion to this thought. That which God requires is not poverty of outward condition but poverty of spirit. The despoiling of the outward life is of no virtue: it is the proud spirit, covetousness, over-carefulness, ambition, the lusts which choke the good seed, which must be eradicated from the heart; it is the soul that needs to realise its poverty.‡ How, if it is heavily weighted with gold, with the anxious care of property, can it spread its wings and fly heavenwards?§ Does not St. Paul say that men can use the world as not abusing it? and possess riches, yet be as though they possessed them not? The treasury of Christianity will richly supply all wants, and the best defence with which we can be surrounded will be the love of the poor comforted by us. Yes; widows, orphans, the indigent,—these are the glorious, unarmed bodyguard of love.‖

Clement takes a no less elevated point of view in his estimate of martyrdom. He does not exalt it beyond measure, nor pay to it an idolatrous and perilous homage. He condemns it whenever it is a kind

* "Strom.," iv. 18, 118.

† Καλῶς οὖν πλουτεῖν οὐ κεκῶλυκεν, ἀλλὰ γὰρ τὸ ἀδίκως καὶ ἀπλήστως πλουτεῖν. (Ibid., iii. 6, 56.)

‡ Τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτὴν γυμνῶσαι τῶν παθῶν. ("De div. serv.," 12.)

§ Ibid., 17.

‖ Στρατὸν ἄοπλον. ("Strom.," 34.)

of suicide, and is sought for its own sake, when it might have been avoided by the exercise of rational prudence.* The cowardice which flinches from the duty of confession is indeed inexcusable,† and nothing is more beautiful than suffering bravely borne for Jesus Christ at the call of duty. The true Christian, as he dies a death of ignominy, is assured of the royal friendship of God. No man can rob him of his liberty, or of the love that fills his heart. ‡ Yet he is not placed on a higher platform than his brethren, for all suffering endured in the name of Christ is martyrdom and confession.§ Thus is maintained the unity of that great morality of love which is independent of circumstances and outward differences, and which is never more truly realised than in the wide propagation of the truth and of the divine life, for he who becomes the generous dispenser of these so far resembles God. He reproduces the charity of which he himself has been the subject.‖

The high spirituality of Clement manifests itself in his conception of the religious life, properly so called. He does not admit any of those distinctions which were the special peculiarities of Judaism. He does not recognise the wide separation between the sacred and the profane, between the human and the divine element, which characterised the period of the law. Neither does he acknowledge any special priesthood, or any essential difference among Christians. Ecclesiastical offices are maintained; the bishop is not so

* "Strom.," iv. 4, 17. † Ibid., iv. 4, 16. ‡ Ibid., iv. 7, 53.

§ *Εἰ τοίνυν ἡ πρὸς θεὸν ὁμολογία μαρτυρία ἐστὶ. πᾶσα ἡ καθαρῶς πολιτευσαμένη ψυχὴ μετ' ἐπιγνώσεως τοῦ θεοῦ ἡ ταῖς ἐντολαῖς ἐπακι,κουῖα μάρτυς ἐστὶ καὶ βιῳ καὶ λόγῳ.* (Ibid., iv. 4, 15.) ‖ Ibid., vii. 9, 42.

completely identified with the elder as in the previous epoch,* but Clement's views are nevertheless as far as possible from favouring the idea of a hierarchy.† "There is but one Master, and He is in heaven; hence all Christians are alike disciples."‡ "The true relation between Him and us consists in this, that perfect truth belongs only to the Lord our Master, and that our feebleness and ignorance constrain us to come to Him for all wisdom." All Christians are children placed under the teaching of the Divine Schoolmaster. They form the flock which, like a shepherd, He guides by His crook. § "He who teaches, and he who is taught, have both but one Master, from whom proceed both the word and the understanding."‖ There is no other apostolic succession than that of faith and piety. "The true gnostic, in other words, the complete Christian, supplies the absence of the apostles by the purity of his life and knowledge."¶ After all, the great apostle, the great witness of Christ, who instructs us and leads us to Him, is the Church,** and the Church is composed of those "new creatures" in whose heart the new law has been engraven as on a living tablet.††

In opposition to this broad conception of the universal priesthood, we may perhaps be reminded of

* "Pædag.," iii. 12, 97.

† "Strom.," vii. 3, 1. In this passage the elders are contrasted with the deacons, as invested with the higher office · they are therefore really likened to the bishops.

‡ Εἷς διδάσκαλος ἐν οὐρανοῖς· οἱ ἐπι γῆς εἰκότως ἂν πάντες κεκλήσονται μαθηταί. ("Pædag.," i. 5, 17.)

§ Ibid., i. 5, 17.

‖ Εἷς γὰρ ὁ διδάσκαλος καὶ τοῦ λέγοντος καὶ τοῦ ἀκροωμένου. ("Strom.," i. 1, 12.)

¶ Ὁ γνωστικὸς οὗτος τὴν ἀποστολικὴν ἀπουσίαν ἀνταναπληροῖ βιοῖς ὀιθῶς γιγνώσκων ἀκριβῶς. (Ibid., vii. 12, 77.)

** Ἡ ἐκκλησια ἡδε καὶ ὁ νυμφιὸς ὁ μόνος διδασκάλος. ("Pædag.," iii. 12, 93.)

†† Ibd., iii. 12, 94.

Clement's singular theories as to the mysteries of religious knowledge which are to be revealed only to the elect—the true gnostics. But the modifications with which he qualifies this esoteric theory, so opposed to the true spirit of the gospel, take away from it all analogy with a priestly caste. In substance all that he maintains is this, that scientific theology, the heights and depths of religious knowledge, are not directly accessible to all.* He commends the presentation of the higher truths in symbolic language, on the ground that it stimulates indolent thought, and tends to incite and arouse it by the very charm of mystery.† On the other hand, it hides sacred things from souls profane, so that pearls are not cast before swine, to the greater condemnation of the impious.‡ Clement lays stress on the typical and parabolic character of Scripture, § and he is certainly not wholly wrong. There was danger, however, in marking out such a track at a time when all the traditions of ancient philosophy tended to foster the proud aristocracy of intellect. It was easy to arrive by such a path at a sort of doctrinal priesthood, which should attach to religious science an overwhelming privilege. Clement desires a guide, a well-known catechist, who should be the teacher of truth in the Church.‖ He does not make it sufficiently clear that the human master ought himself to be amenable to those whom he instructs, and to that universal faith of the Church which the Divine Teacher imparts to every one of His members.

* "Strom.," i. 1, 13.
† "Ινα ζητητικοὶ ὑπάρχωμεν. (Ibid., vi. 15, 126.)
‡ Ibid., v. 9, 58.
§ Ibid., vi. 15, 126.
‖ Ἐξηγητοῦ τινὸς καὶ καθηγητοῦ χρείαν ἔχειν. (Ibid., v. 9, 57.)

Science can never interpose as a necessary medium between the soul and the Word, in matters relating to the divine life, that is to say, in truths which are essential. In his excessive desire to represent truth as accessible by successive steps, Clement goes so far as to confound allegory with a sort of dissimulation. He consents to the partial veiling, in teaching, of even the highest truths.* We must bear in mind, however, that initiation into the deepest mysteries of knowledge is not made the peculiar privilege of any one caste, but belongs to all who are willing to ascend, step by step, the ladder of light. While, therefore, we reject esoterism even in this form, we are bound to admit that in Clement's system it has no analogy with priestcraft.

That which is clearly conclusive on this point is the repudiation of all outward sacrifice, for there can be no true priesthood where there is no sacrifice. We have seen how far Clement's views led him in an opposite direction. He was not prepared to admit the necessity of sacrifice even in the Old Covenant, or its full significance in the cross of Christ. How then could he desire its perpetuity? The daily sacrifices of the Christian are prayer, the reading of Holy Scripture, praise, and the generous charity which is exercised both in the communication of the knowledge of God to the ignorant, and in the breaking of bread to the hungry.† This is the sacrifice most excellent and acceptable to God.‡ The true Christian who realises this ideal of piety is the truly royal man, the sacred

* "Strom.," vii. 9, 53.

† *Αὐτίκα θυσιαι μὲν αὐτῷ εὐχαὶ, ἐντεύξεις τῶν γραφῶν, ψαλμοὶ. οὐ καὶ τνν ἄλλην θυσιαν τὴν κατὰ τοὺς δεομένους ἐπιδοσιν καὶ δογμάτων καὶ χρημάτωὴ γιγνώσκει.* (Ibid., vii. 7, 49.)

‡ Ibid., vii. 6, 31.

priest of the Godhead.* Such a conception of Christianity is altogether alien from the idea of a hierarchy. The Church is the temple of God; the earthly altar, into which enter as living stones all those who are of one heart and of one soul in prayer.† This true Church is no outward institution, a petrified catholicity; it is distinct from all its partial realisations. Those alone who have fulfilled the divine commands deserve to be admitted among the apostolic elect. The true deacon, the true elder, is not the man who has received the imposition of hands, but he who has fulfilled the conditions of his office.‡ It is plain that the same principles apply to private Christians, and we have thus, in an implicit form, the distinction between the visible and invisible Church.

The distinction of days Clement repudiates in principle not less strongly than the distinctions of religious caste, although he allows the observance of the Lord's day and of the Christian festivals, as he allows the existence of various offices in the Church. "We must needs," he says, "honour and worship Him whom we believe to be the Word, the Saviour, the Master; and by Him we must worship the Father, not on certain chosen days, as some imagine, but in every possible manner, and through the whole course of our life. The gnostic, or the true Christian, does not worship God in a consecrated place, in a sanctuary set apart, nor on certain festival and appointed days, but always, and in every place. He believes that God

* Ἱερεὺς ὅσιος τοῦ θεοῦ, βασιλικὸς ἄνθρωπος. ("Strom.," vii. 7, 36.)

† Ἔστι γοῦν τὸ παρ' ἡμῖν θυσιαστήριον τὸ ἐπιγείον τὸ ἄθροισμα τῶν ταῖς εὐχαῖς ἀνακειμένων μίαν ὥσπερ ἔχον φωνὴν τὴν κοινὴν καὶ μίαν γνώμην. (Ibid., vii. 6, 31.)

‡ Ibid., vi. 13, 105.

is everywhere, that He is not confined within sacred enclosures. We who believe in His universal presence make our entire life a festival; we sing His praises as we work, as we sail on the sea, or go about any of our various occupations.* All places, all times in which the thought of God occupies our minds, are alike sacred." Prayer is not merely the utterance of articulate words, it is the close converse of our soul with God. Our secret thoughts are the prayer which He hears.†

Such a system as that we have set forth, which had its basis in the original harmony between the human soul and the Word, could not recognise any purely external authority in the realm of religious thought. It is doubtless very necessary that the Word should be known by us, and exhibited in His true character. Hence the importance of revelation, which finds its most perfect expression in the Incarnation. We must needs know where we can find the true Christ. The Holy Scriptures are invested in this respect with the highest authority. They are the standard of truth,‡ for they echo in our ears the very voice of the Word, which our heart acknowledges, and to which it must respond.§ They are truly inspired of God,‖ and we should be very guilty were we to mutilate them after the manner of the heretics. Clement's ideas with regard to the canon of Scripture are not, however, very exact; for he frequently quotes the apocryphal writings of both the Old and New

* Πάντα τοίνυν τὸν βίον ἑορτὴν ἄγοντες. ("Strom.," vii. 7, 35, 36.)
† Ibid., vii. 7, 40-43. ‡ Ibid., vii. 16, 94. § Ibid., vii. 16, 95.
‖ Τὰς θεοπνεύστους γραφάς. (Ibid., vii. 16, 101.)

Testaments.* He affirms the inspiration of the former, but without defining with any precision his view of that inspiration. He does not hold that the supernatural gifts of prophecy ceased with the sacred writers, since he asserts for himself a sort of inspiration of God, declaring that he will be guided in all his statements of doctrine by the Spirit of God.† He does not, then, recognise any essential difference between the inspiration of the apostles and that of Christians of all ages. Scripture, nevertheless, maintains the supreme authority, for it alone leads us direct to the fountain of wisdom; but for its due understanding we need to make use of our own rational and reflective powers. Clement objects to the purely literal interpretations, which were often given by rabbinical Gnosticism.‡ He himself falls into the opposite extreme, and advocates the theory of the threefold meaning. He discovers in each sacred text at once a sign of the truth, a commandment, and a prophecy.§ He dwells constantly upon the mysterious and allegorical character of revelation, which makes it a duty for us to lift the veil of the primary meaning. The Book of God is not a cold, inert monument of the past; it is not even like a stream, which flows, as it were, spontaneously from its source. No; the heavenly

* Clement quotes, as Holy Scripture, the "Pastor Hermas" ("Strom.," i. 17, 85; Ibid., ii. 9, 43); the "Gospel of the Egyptians" (Ibid., iii. 9, 63); the "Epistle of Clement of Rome" (Ibid., iv. 17, 107); the works of Maccabeus and Tobias ("Strom.," i. 21, 123).

† Τελειωθείσης τοίνυν τῆς προθέσεως ἡμῖν ἁπάσης ἐν οἷς ἐὰν θελήσῃ τὸ πνεῦμα ὑπομνήμασι. (Ibid., iv. 1, 31.) We shall complete our task (of unfolding the subject of the book) by the help of the explanation which the Holy Spirit shall be pleased to suggest to us.

‡ Ibid., vii. 16, 99.

§ Ὡς σημεῖον, ὡς ἐντολήν, ὡς προφητείαν. (Ibid., i. 28, 179.)

virtue is constantly infused afresh into it, as the milk fills the breasts of the mother.* Revelation is ever living. Is not holiness also a divine inscription, graven by the hand of the Lord, not upon tables of stone, but upon the heart?†

Clement recognises oral tradition, but only as a source of history, never pretending that it is an infallible authority. Scripture does not contain the whole of revelation, either under the Old Covenant or the New.‡ The higher knowledge, the true wisdom (*gnosis*), was transmitted orally by the apostles,§ for there is an essential part of revelation which cannot be written. These passages, isolated as they are, contain the principle of a grave error, by placing an anonymous and irresponsible authority on a par with that of the written revelation. Clement is led into this doctrine, so full of danger, by the aristocratic pride of intellect, which was not wholly subdued in him. Happily, he formed no organisation for the perpetuation of oral tradition; he acknowledges no authority as decisive but that of Scripture; he does not entrust the care of this to a hierarchy, but to the Christian conscience, which has an aptitude for discerning the fundamental articles of doctrine, the immovable foundations upon which every one should build.

Chapters fourteen and fifteen of the seventh book of the "Stromata," contain the development of these grand ideas. Timid minds, which need the help of an external authority to give fixity to their fluctuating

* "Pædag.," i. 6, 41. † Ibid., iii. 12, 94. ‡ "Strom.," v. 10, 63.
§ Ἡ γνῶσις δὲ αὐτὴ ἡ κατὰ διαδοχὰς εἰς ὀλίγους ἐκ τῶν ἀποστόλων ἀγράφως παραδοθεῖσα κατελήλυθεν. (Ibid., vi. 7, 61.)

views, urge, in objection to Clement, the divisions which have arisen in the heart of Christendom. How is truth to be known in the midst of so much diversity? Do not the variations of doctrinal teaching prevent its recognition, and submerge it beneath their opposing currents?* This is the very thesis maintained by Bossuet against the Reformation. Clearly, if the Church had at this early time possessed a recognised authority in matters of doctrine, to which final appeal should be made in questions of the faith, Clement would have invoked it, as did the great French apologist; and all these objectors would have been at once silenced. He does nothing of the kind. He replies, first, that it is the glory as well as the peril of all great principles that they stir up warm controversy: opposition is sure to attend all that is grand and good.† None will say that because there are many physicians belonging to various schools of medicine, therefore the path of wisdom is to consult none: on the contrary, men will carefully inquire which is the best. The traveller who finds himself at the junction of several cross roads—some leading to a precipice, others to a rushing river—will not on that account stand still where he is, but will set himself to seek out the path which will bring him in safety to his destination.‡ If two fruits be offered to us—the one fresh and sweet, and the other a mere imitation in wax—we shall be at no loss to make our choice. But this choice must be made in all seriousness and good faith, and we must not shrink

* "Strom.," vii. 15, 89.
† *Παντὶ τῷ καλῷ μῶμος ἕπεται.* (Ibid., vii. 15, 89.)
‡ Ibid., vii. 15, 91.

from the toil of a manly investigation. Truth is worth all it costs. It is a laborious and difficult acquisition, and in order to find it we must use all the powers of our mind. It cannot be either discovered or retained without determined effort.* Heresy increases the arduousness of the task. We are called, then, to distinguish between the true and the false. We have an inward criterion, which discovers that which is opposed to our true nature.†

But the great criterion is Holy Scripture, which shows us whence heresies arise, and enables us to recognise the pure doctrine in the true Church. ‡ Thus, the supreme tribunal is Scripture, and not the Church, with this proviso—that Scripture be not consulted in isolated passages, but in its perfection as a whole.§ We have seen, in the Apology of Clement, that in his view faith in the Divine Book is based upon faith in the person of Jesus: we believe in the Holy Scriptures because our hearts have heard the voice of the living Christ. We must not ask of them more than they are able to give, seeking in them a fully developed theology, for this would be to confound faith with science. No; there is no other basis for a true catholicity than the unanimity of believers upon

* Διὰ πλείονος τοίνυν φροντίδος ἐρευνητέον τὴν τῷ ὄντι ἀλήθειαν. ("Strom.," vii. 15, 91.)

† Τὸ ἀπρεπὲς καὶ παρὰ φύσιν. (Ibid., vii. 15, 91.)

‡ Δι' αὐτῶν τῶν γραφῶν ἐκμανθάνειν ἀποδεικτικῶς, ὅπως μὲν ἀπεσφάλησαν αἱ αἱρέσεις, ὅπως δὲ ἐν μόνῃ τῇ ἀληθείᾳ ἐκκλησίᾳ ἡ τε ἀκριβεστάτη γνῶσις. (Ibid., vii. 15, 92.) "The Scriptures teach us demonstratively how heresies have deviated from the truth, and how exact knowledge is found only in the true Church." Thus the Holy Scriptures are placed explicitly above the Church, since they alone are the warrant for its doctrine. The importance of this plain passage cannot be overstated. (Ibid., vii. 15. 92.)

§ Ibid., vii. 16, 96.

the essential articles of belief. This is the true canon of the Church.* By virtue of this distinction between faith and theology, Clement maintains the universal *Credo*, while he yet leaves the necessary latitude to the spirit of investigation and scientific progress. He insists, as he always does, upon the moral aspect of knowledge. Heresy, which leads us back into the speculations of the world, is like Lot's wife looking back upon Sodom. Let us look upward and onward. † Clearly, these exhortations refer only to the appropriation of truth in its moral and living character, and do not apply to its scientific element. It is by the light of these principles we must interpret the seventeenth chapter, in which he appeals to the antiquity and unity of the Church in support of his views. "The true Church," he says, "is one of great antiquity; God is here, the Lord is here. It is one in its essence, in its thought, in its principle, in its excellence; it is both ancient and universal. All its members tend to this unity of the faith founded on the two particular Testaments—or let us rather say on the Testament—which remains one and the same through all the diversity of times, by the will of the one God and Saviour."‡ Thus the foundation of this unity and of this antiquity of the Church is ever the Book of God. To appeal to antiquity, as Clement does, is simply to appeal to the primitive type of the faith. The unity which he vindicates holds good, as he has himself said, only of fundamentals. It is, moreover, progressive, a height towards

* Οὕτως καὶ ἡμᾶς κατὰ μηδένα τρόπον τὸν ἐκκλησιαστικὸν παραβαίνειν προσήκει κανόνα, καὶ μάλιστα τὴν περὶ τῶν μεγίστων ὁμολογίαν ἡμεῖς φυλάττομεν. ("Strom.," vii. 15, 90.)

† Ibid., vii. 16, 93.

‡ Ibid., vii. 17, 107.

which the members of the Church are bound to be ever pressing onward. From all these statements it follows that Clement was one of the most faithful representatives of liberalism in the Church, at a time when the hierarchical system was seeking to consolidate itself.

His idea of the sacrament bears the same characteristic impress. If he regards baptism as the illumination of the Christian, he nevertheless sets aside any idea of magical virtue in the ordinance, when he declares that Jesus Christ, the type of the Christian, became perfect in baptism because then the Holy Spirit descended upon Him.* Again, we must ever bear in mind Clement's beautiful exposition of the manner in which salvation is appropriated by the Christian by the act of faith, which he conceives to be the freest and most personal act that can be performed. The impartation of the Holy Spirit then is that which attaches value to the sacrament. The baptism which brings illumination is a rational or spiritual act.† The Lord's Supper cannot be regarded as a sacrifice in a system which recognises only the offering of the heart and lips. The material element has no place in it. "Often," says Clement, "the Lord uses allegorically the terms food, flesh, bread, blood, milk." ‡ The mixing of wine and water in the communion, is supposed sometimes to set forth the union in man of the earthly and the

* Τελειοῦται δὲ τῷ λουτρῷ μόνῳ καὶ τοῦ πνεύματος τῇ καθόδῳ ἁγιάζεται. ("Pædag," i. 6, 25.) The Holy Spirit is not in the water; He comes down from heaven. The spiritual act alone gives value to the material act.

† Λογικῷ βαπτίσματι. (Ibid., i. 6, 29.)

‡ Πολλαχῶς ἀλληγορεῖται ὁ λόγος καὶ βρῶμα καὶ σὰρξ καὶ τροφὴ καὶ ἄρτος καὶ αἷμα καὶ γάλα, ἅπαντα ὁ κύριος εἰς ἀπόλαυσιν ἡμῶν. (Ibid., i. 6, 47.)

spiritual element,* sometimes the union of the law and the Gospel.† A symbol of which the significations are so various, cannot be regarded in any aspect as containing the body of Christ. Clement says distinctly, that when Jesus pronounced the words, "This is my blood, drink ye all of it," this blood of the vine was the Word Himself, whose blood was shed for many for the remission of sins. It allegorically represented the sacred draught of salvation.‡ In other words, the eucharistic cup is the symbol of salvation. Elsewhere he declares that it is by knowledge that men eat and drink the divine Word.§

The doctrine of the consummation of all things is not exhibited at all in this system; we find no trace of millenarianism. Clement admits a continuation of progress in faith and love beyond the grave, since the work of purification is to be carried on after the present life.‖

The ultimate salvation of all, though not formally stated, is the logical conclusion of a doctrine which recognises in punishment no other design than the merciful one of healing and restoration.

* Ἀναλόγως κίρναται ὁ μὲν οἶνος, τῷ ὕδατι, τῷ δὲ ἀνθρώπῳ τὸ πνεῦμα. ("Pædag.," ii. 2, 20.)

† Ibid., ii. 2, 29.

‡ Καὶ εὐλόγησεν γε τὸν οἶνον, εἰπών · λάβετε, πίετε · τοῦτό μού ἐστιν τὸ αἷμα, αἷμα τῆς ἀμπέλου, τὸν λόγον τὸν περὶ πυλλῶν ἐκχεύμενον εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτίων εὐφρυσύνης ἅγιον ἀλληγορεῖ νᾶμα. (Ibid., ii. 2, 32.)

§ Βρῶσις γὰρ καὶ πόσις τοῦ θείου λόγου ἡ γνῶσίς ἐστι τῆς θείας οὐσιας. ("Strom.," v. 10, 67.)

‖ Ibid., vi. 14, 109.

CHAPTER IV.

CONTINUATION OF THE ALEXANDRINE SCHOOL. THE SYSTEM OF ORIGEN.*

HITHERTO we have met with only fragmentary expositions of Christian doctrine. Origen is the first theologian who elaborates a complete system. This was at once his glory and his peril—a peril worthily and nobly braved by the Christian thinker, who, rising above mere isolated ideas, seeks to grasp the ruling principle of revelation. All science worthy of the name must aim at unity. If this were not a lawful object of aspiration in the domain of religion, why should the human mind so intuitively aspire to it? Doubtless, it is not lawful to purchase it at the price of an arbitrary treatment of the problem, and to imagine that unity is attained when those refractory ideas, which will not lend themselves to an incomplete or premature synthesis, have been brought into subjection or set aside altogether. But theology and philosophy only enter truly into the scientific movement when they rise from the fragmentary to an organic condition, when they not only gather together the materials for the building, but embrace the plan which gives unity to the structure.

* Beside the books already quoted, we may refer to Redepenning's beautiful monograph on Origen ("Origenes. Eine Darstellung seines Lebens und seiner Lehre.," vol. ii., Bonn, 1843).

Then only does science progress. The explanations given, as they one after another betray their inadequacy, stimulate the spirit of research, while the simple statement of particular truths leaves the mind stationary and inert. The attempt made by Origen to systematise religious truth, marks therefore an important era in the history of Christian thought. He claimed to find in the Gospel the key to all mysteries, that is, the highest philosophy, without impairing in any way its true evangelical character. In fact, he openly declares himself a believer. He acknowledges at the very outset the authority of Scripture, and explicitly accepts the universal faith of the Church of his time. But this faith has not been received by him passively as a dead tradition; it is with him the experience of the heart and the logical conviction of the mind. Hence, when he expounds it to his contemporaries, the proportions he gives to it of a system so comprehensive and scientific, that the loftiest genius may delight to contemplate it. And yet the inspiration of this grand philosophy, which is inferior to none in boldness, is always humble and fervent love to Jesus. Christian science is in Origen's view the full faith or knowledge, which rises to the direct contemplation of its object, and ascends from the visible Christ, "known after the flesh," to the Eternal Word. He falls into the same error as Clement, in thinking too lightly of the foundation of this transcendent knowledge—that historical Gospel which is the very substance of the truth—and in treating the letter of the Scriptures as a seal that needs to be broken. It remains none the less true that speculation is never with him a mere mental feat; that it is rather

the aspiration of the entire being after the living and complete possession of the truth.

Origen spoke the philosophical language of his time. He resolutely dealt with the problems which occupied the minds of his contemporaries. In order rightly to estimate and understand him, we must bear constantly in mind that sublime and subtle pantheism which was the primary inspiration both of Valentinian Gnosticism and of Platonism. If his mind frequently forsakes the solid ground of psychological observation and exact history, to soar into vague regions which are neither heaven nor earth, it is because he is desirous to occupy a sphere as wide as that of his adversaries. Anxious to excel them in science, no less than in faith, he will not abandon to them any vantage ground. Like them, he peoples the infinite void with the creations of his imagination. To the Æons he opposes good and bad angels; he does not hesitate to invent a sort of mythology, of which the inspiration is Christian, but which in its bold additions to the positive statements of revelation, necessarily becomes visionary. Herein is not the strength and beauty of his system. These are found in that bold vindication of liberty, which is its central and vital principle. It may be said that the vast theological edifice reared by him is, as it were, the temple of liberty. Liberty is its foundation and its topstone; nay, it is more, it is the animating soul of the whole doctrine taught therein. Pantheistic naturalism had struck the whole world with a death-chill. Origen reawakens it with the breath of liberty, restores it to life, and snatches it from the petrifying grasp of fatalism. In the boldness of his thought he

denies the existence of necessity altogether. All the phenomena of the material world are free acts. Bodies owe their existence to the motions of the will. If matter gravitates or ascends, it is not by a simple physical law, but is connected with moral action. Liberty is the explanation of all things.

The great merit of Origen is his endeavour to trace back all the diversity of things to one and the same idea. Unhappily his conception of liberty was incomplete, as we shall see, and his error on this fundamental point produced results all the more serious, because of the close logical coherence of his system.

§ I. *The Theodicy of Origen.*

Origen, like his master Clement, does not escape the influence of Platonist abstraction, in his conception of the first principle. God dwells in light inaccessible, glorious; He cannot be known by His works, which are but feeble radiations of His majesty.* He is the essential Being, the sole possessor of life absolute and immutable, and therefore free from every material element, for matter is the subject of perpetual change.† He is Spirit, uncomposed, simple, the Supreme One, the Monas.‡ He cannot be designated by any attribute, nor by any name.§ He is known perfectly only to Himself. Even the Word does not know Him as He

* "De Principiis," book i., chaps. 1, 6, vol. i. Delarue's edition, p. 51.

† Πᾶν σῶμα ὑλικὸν ἔχει φύσιν ἀλλοιωτὴν καὶ δι' ὅλων μεταβλητήν. ("In Joann.," book xiii. 21, vol. iv. 231.)

‡ "Intellectualis natura, simplex, sed ut sit ex omni parte μονὰς, et ut ita dicam, ἑνάς." ("De Princip.," i. 1, 6.)

§ "Contra Cels.," book vii. 38.

knows Himself. "His own contemplation of Himself is higher than that of the Son.* Thus the Absolute has no true existence except in the first person of the Trinity. Even in the matter of self-knowledge He is under no necessity to seek His manifestation in a second person like unto Himself; indeed, no manifestation of Him can be adequate. He remains the One who can neither be named nor defined, and who alone is cognisant of the entire mystery of His own being. The Godhead is complete in the Father. The Word and the Holy Spirit are necessary only for the purposes of creation, though they are themselves infinitely above all created life. Without the creation, the Monas would be self-sufficing in the unfathomable depth of His essence. This is again the old leaven of Platonism, from which the Christian theology of that age could not free itself, when it entered on the formation of its theodicy.

Origen dwells by preference on the immutability of God. Nothing can make Him change. Hence it is wrong to speak of His anger or his indignation.† Justice and love are indissolubly united in Him. He is not taking vengeance when He condemns, and mercy blends with all His severity. All the expressions of Scripture which do not harmonise with this immutability of His essence are pure anthropomorphisms.‡ Let us observe that love is here presented rather as the guarantee of the immutability of God, than as the essence of His being; it is the attribute rather than the substance.

* Τῇ ἑαυτοῦ θεωρίᾳ οὔσῃ μείζονι τῆς ἐν υἱῷ θεωρίας. ("In Joann.,' book xxxii. 18, vol. iv. 449.)

† Ἀληθῶς οὐκ ὀργίζεται. ("In Jerem. Homil.," 18, 6, vol. iii. 249.)

‡ "In Genes. Homil.," iii. 2, vol. ii. 67.

It is in virtue also of this immutability that Origen declares the creation to have neither beginning nor end. It cannot be conceived that the goodness of God should ever be inactive, for this would suppose a change at some period in the Divine life. It must then have ever had an object on which to expend itself, and this object has always been produced for its own good. Creation is an eternal act of the Divine love. We arrive at this result, because as the will and power of God are eternal, so we cannot suppose the existence of any cause at any time preventing Him from producing the good He desired. Just as He could not be a Father if there were no Son, nor a ruler if there were nothing to govern, so He could not be called Almighty if there were no scope for the exercise of His almightiness. "Since God shows Himself truly to us as the All-Powerful, it is necessary that the universe should exist."* If we can suppose a time when the universe was not, it is obvious that God must have undergone a change, passing from a state of inaction to the creative act. It follows that it is not possible to say that the world is not, like God, without beginning or end.†

Origen does not intend to say that the world shares absolutely in the eternity of God; for the peculiar characteristic of the eternal is not endless duration, but immutable existence. God is beyond all space and all time;‡ herein consists His omnipresence and omnis-

* "Ideo ut omnipotens ostendatur Deus, omnia subsistere necesse est." ("De Princip.," i. 2, 10, vol. i. 57.)

† Οὐκ ἄρα δυνατὸν λέγειν μὴ εἶναι ἄναρχον καὶ συναΐδιον τῷ θεῷ τὸ πᾶν. (Photius, "Codex," 235. Huet, vol. i. p. 57, note *f*. Comp. "De Princip.," iii. 5 3.) "Nullam habuit aliam creandi causam nisi propter se ipsum, id est bonitatem suam." (Ibid., ii. 9, 6.)

‡ "Homil. in Exod.," vi. 14, vol. ii. 151.

cience. This omniscience, however, is not absolutely unlimited, for God cannot foresee evil, which is a nonentity.* Though the world is under the dominion of progression and change, it has no more a beginning than the creative act from which it emanates. In fact, Origen contradicts himself on this important point. If creation is indeed necessary to the immutability of the Divine Being, it was not called into existence solely for its own good. God had a motive to creation in Himself and for Himself; the world is in a manner the complement of Himself. This is the fatal consequence of every doctrine which does not find in the very sphere of the Divine, the supreme realisation of love. There is no other means of preserving unimpaired the full freedom of the creative act.

We have spoken hitherto of the act of creation only in its relation to the Divine immutability; in so far, that is, as it belongs to theodicy. We shall consider presently creation itself in its various phases. The doctrine of the Trinity, as taught by Origen, receives its true character from this conception of the origin of the world. Without doubt the Word is the glory of the uncreated light, His eternal radiation, inseparable from its source; and in this sense the Father cannot be conceived of apart from the Son. "We acknowledge that God has always been the Father of His only Son, begotten of Him, deriving from Him all that He is, having no beginning."† Let us bear in mind, however, that God knows

* "Omne quod malum est, scientia ejus vel præscientia habetur indignum." ("Comm. in Epist. ad Rom.," vii. vol. iv. 603.)
† "Sine initio." ("De Princip.," i. 2, 2, vol. i. 54.)

Himself better than He is known by the Son, and that consequently the Absolute is in an emphatic manner unique. God has in Himself greater glory than in the Son. In the contemplation of Himself He arrives at a truer knowledge of His own being than is possessed by the Son.* If the Father cannot be separated from the Son, it is because the perpetuity of the creative act is essential to the conception of His immutability. This is the great contradiction of the system. Creation is on the one hand the guarantee of the Divine immutability; and on the other hand its necessity impinges on the perfection of the Absolute, which cannot be linked to a contingent existence. What, in truth, is the Word if it be not the eternal idea of multiple being? God is the Monas in its absolute simplicity; the Word is the personification, the hypostasis of the Divine reason, in so far as it is applied to the multiple, the principle of all development, the bond uniting the various component parts of the universe, the unity of all ideas.† Language which is composed of various connected propositions, represents perfectly the nature of the Word.‡ He is the archetype of the manifold images, the prototype of the truth diffused in reasonable souls, which carry His impress stamped upon their thoughts; the central, primordial idea, containing in itself all subordinate and particular ideas.§

* "In Joann.," xxxii. 18.

† Σύστασις τῆς περὶ τῶν ὅλων θεωρίας καὶ νοημάτων. (Ibid., tome. i. vol. iv. 20.) Ὁ θεὸς μὲν οὖν ἓν ἐστι καὶ ἁπλοῦν, ὁ σωτὴρ ἡμῶν διὰ τὰ πολλά. (Ibid., 21.)

‡ Ibid., tome v. fragm., vol. iv. 96.

§ Ἀρχέτυπος εἰκὼν πλειόνων εἰκόνων. (Ibid., tome ii. 2; vol. iv. 51.)

The relation between the Son and creation is brought out very clearly in these expressions: it is as patent in the system of Origen as in the writings of Justin, Athenagoras, and Tertullian. It is true that Origen further holds the pre-existence of the Word; but as creation itself has no beginning, this in no way destroys the essential correlation between the Son of God and the world. We might be tempted on this ground to identify the doctrine of Origen with that of Philo or of Neoplatonism, and to see in the Word only an impersonal idea—the symbol of the eternal creation—and thus to destroy all true distinction between Him and the world. This would be an error. If it cannot be denied that in Origen's system the Word has a distinct existence only in view of creation, it must nevertheless be acknowledged that the Word is not confounded with the creation. He alone is the complete and adequate image of the Father. No creature, not even that which occupies the highest place in the hierarchy of being, can claim the same filial relation as the Son to the Deity. The Word is not external to God, but is God Himself.* He has received the full communication of the glory, the power, the knowledge of the first principle. He does not only share in wisdom, reason, truth; He is wisdom itself, truth itself, reason itself.† The only difference between Him and the Father is that the knowledge of God is original, that of the Son is derived. God produces that which He knows; His omniscience is only another term for His omnipotence. With Him, to foresee or to predetermine

* "Contra Cels.," i. 57; viii. 12.

† *Αὐτοσοφία, αὐτοαλήθεια, αὐτόλογος.* (Ibid., iii. 41.)

is to lay down the principle of the future event, which beyond this depends on the free choice of His creatures.* He does not merely know all things by virtue of His wisdom and prescience, but He keeps all in His own power.†

God alone knows all things, and has a perfect knowledge of Himself, in which not even the Son shares to the same degree; for the Word has only a derived and passive knowledge of the Father. He is not the Absolute God, but simply God; He has not the immutable existence which belongs only to the supreme Monas. "God only is God by His own nature."‡ Thus the Saviour says in His prayer, "That they may know Thee, the only true God." The Being, then, who is not by His own nature God, becomes a sharer in the Deity. He is *made God;* He is not *the God* with the article, but simply *God* without the article,§ the first-born of every creature, who is above all gods. He only preserves His divinity by abiding in the contemplation of the Father. It follows that He is not the simple, essential, unchangeable good; He does not possess immutability. The Father is above Him, as the Son is above all other beings. This inferiority made it possible that He should humble Himself for the salvation of the world. Since He was not the im-

* "Quod autem præfinit, præfinit principium præfiniendi faciens." ("Comment. Series in Matth.," 55, vol. iii. 874.)

† "Sin autem comprehensionem eam dicimus, ut non solum sensu quis et sapientia comprehendat, sed et virtute et potentia cuncta teneat quæ cognovit, non possumus dicere, quod comprehendat Filius Patrem, Pater vero omnia comprehendit." ("De Princip.," iv. 35.)

‡ Αὐτόθεος ὁ θεὸς ἔστι. ("In Joann.," ii. 2. Comp. "De Princip.," i. 2, 13.)

§ Θεοποιούμενον, οὐχ ὁ θεὸς, ἀλλά θεός. (Ibid.)

mutable One, He could come down into the region of death and of change.* But this very clear subordination detracts nothing from His divine nature. He is distinguished from all created beings, first, because He was not created but eternally begotten by the Father; He is born of the will of God. That will is the eternal germ of the Word.† He is not then the product of an emanation, but of a moral act, in which all the divine energy is concentrated, and which is its plenary manifestation; for the will is the very essence of the free Deity. Thus the Son is of the same essence as the Father.‡ He remains closely united to Him in love; the two wills form but one.§ In the second place, He is not only above creation—He is its first cause. He it is who has called all beings into existence, imparting the higher life to all who are endowed with reason and liberty, and establishing the order and harmony of the universe.‖ Lastly, goodness is His as a part of His very essence, and He cannot lose it, while the creature possesses it not as an element of his very being, but as the result of a moral determination. It is therefore possible for him to lose it.¶ The Word thus defined is widely different from the mere abstraction of Platonism,

* "In Joann.," ii. 21.

† "Velut quædam voluntas ejus ex mente procedens." ("De Princip.," i. 2, 6.)

‡ "Communionem substantiæ, ὁμοούσιος videtur." ("Fragm. in Hebræos," vol. iv. 699.)

§ Ὄντα δύο τῇ ὑποστάσει πράγματα, ἓν τῇ ταυτότητι τοῦ βουλήματος. ("Contra Cels.," viii. 12. Comp. "In Joann.," xiii. 36.)

‖ Αὐτουργὸν τοῦ κόσμου. ("Contra Cels.," vi. 60.)

¶ "Immaculatum autem esse præter Patrem et Filium et Spiritum Sanctum, nulli substantialiter inest, sed sanctitas in omni creatura accidens res est." ("De Princip.," i. 5, 5.)

in which the Word is nothing more than the virtual idea of the world. We have here presented to us a living hypostasis,* an active and creative cause, which, while it occupies a subordinate place in reference to the absolute, is nevertheless at an infinite distance from mere created beings. The strength of the Christian sentiment in Origen overpowered his logic, which would else certainly have led him to break down the barrier between the Word and creation; for strictly speaking, and from a metaphysical point of view, His Word is rather the idea of creation than the revelation of the Father. But there are elements in every argument higher than mere logic, and no one has a right to press a doctrine beyond the point marked by such limitations. Origen is a Christian philosopher, and he does not move simply in the region of abstractions. He must needs include in his synthesis the great religious facts which have been apprehended by his heart and conscience, and hence he is obliged to give it notable extension.

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is but slightly touched upon by Origen. He very distinctly recognises the third person in the Trinity, but he regards His existence as derived from the Son, and therefore as subordinate in a still more marked degree.† The Holy Spirit is called the first-fruits of the creation, since He is produced by the Word, who is in a manner the medium of creative action.‡ He is distinguished from

* Ὑπόστασιν ζῶσαν. ("In Joann.," i. 39.)

† Ἐλάττων πρὸς τὸν πατέρα ὁ υἱός, ἔτι δὲ ἧττον τὸ πνεῦμα. ("De Princip.," i. 3, 5.)

‡ Τάξει τιμιώτερον πάντων τῶν ὑπὸ τοῦ πάτρος διὰ Χριστοῦ γενομένων. ("In Joann.," ii. 6, iv. 61.)

the world, however, inasmuch as He shares also in the Divine life. He is the personification and the hypostasis of holiness, as the Word is of the reason. While the Son reigns over all reasonable beings, the Holy Spirit reigns over the saints. He is the centre and source of spiritual gifts, the moral focus of religion.* We have thus three realms of the Divine. The universe, which belongs to the Father; reasonable beings, which are dependent on the Son; and holy souls, which are in communication with the Spirit. The two kingdoms of the Son and of the Spirit are evidently comprehended in that of the Father, who alone has the eternal dominion, for as all proceeds from Him, so all returns to Him. Thus we find that while Origen distinctly speaks of the Trinity, his doctrine is yet widely removed from that of Athanasius, and he bears clearly the impress of his age.† Origen's teaching, nevertheless, is true to the incomparable grandeur of his theme. "The Trinity passes every intelligence, temporal or eternal, for all that is not the Trinity must be measured by the limitations of time."‡

§ II. *The Creation and the Fall.*

The Word being Himself eternally engendered, produces unceasingly the multiform life which exists ideally in Him before He evolves it from nothing. This divine idea comprehends the good alone, for evil is an accident and a nonentity which can neither be

* "De princip.," i. 3, 5.

† "Illa vero substantia Trinitatis quæ principium est et causa omnium, ex qua omnia et per quam omnia." (Ibid., iv. 26.)

‡ "Cætera quæ sunt extra Trinitatem in sæculis et temporibus metienda sunt." (Ibid., iv. 28.)

conceived nor originated by God. The Word creates pure spirits, which are destined to be made participants by Him in the eternal reason, and to be united to Him as He is united to the Father. They are all of the same divine substance. "Every spirit which shares in the spiritual light is evidently of the same nature as every other spirit which has part in the same light. God and all spirits are therefore of the same substance."* The difference is that none of them possess good as an essential part of their being; they are to secure it by their own moral determination, and as a necessary consequence they may lose it. The fundamental axiom of this doctrine is: "Every rational creature is capable of good and evil. His destiny depends not on his original condition, but on his own desert."† Everything hinges on free will. Let us pause to consider this main point of Origen's system; it is the true pivot around which the whole revolves.

Origen has devoted a large part of the third book of his "Treatise on Principles" to this question, refuting with extreme care all objections, especially those taken from Scripture. This demonstration was very necessary at a time when opposition to Christianity was taking the form of pantheistic fatalism. Absolute predestination was the fundamental article of the gnostics, and the aliment of that unreasonable pride by which they exalted themselves above all other beings, deeming these to be by nature fitted only for a lower life.

* "Ex quo concluditur Deum et hæc quodammodo unius esse substantiæ." ("De Princip.," iv. 36.)

† "Omnis creatura rationabilis laudis et culpæ capax." ("De Princip.," i. 5, 2.) "Ex merito non per conditionis prærogativam." (Ibid., i. 5, 2.)

Among beings capable of action, some have the motive power without, some within themselves. Stone and wood belong to the first category. The animal has in himself the spring of movement, a spring which is not merely mechanical, since it is accompanied by instinct. The reasonable being adds to these natural motive powers the force of reason, by which he can distinguish between motives, reject some and accept others.* He has, moreover, the faculty of choosing the good; thus he is responsible for the evil which he commits. It is not true that the free creature is the victim of external influences. He may preserve his chastity in the midst of the most fiery temptations, as he may lose it in the sternest school of morality. The will alone gives the final decision. To hold any other view is to lower man to the level of the brute. How, on such a theory, could we explain repentance, reformation of life, and all that which results from an inward change, while the outward circumstances of the life remain unaltered? Reason constrains us then to admit that if the outward accidents of life are not under our control, it is in our power to make good or bad use of them, by virtue of that Word who is as a judge within us, discriminating between the evil and the good.† Origen quotes, in support of this thesis, the words of Scripture which appeal to human freedom, the great Divine declarations which set before man good and evil, death and life,‡ and above all the appeals made by Jesus to sinners.§ The texts which seem to favour the idea of predestination are carefully

* "De Princip.," iii. 1, 2, 4.
† Ibid., iii. 1, 6.
‡ Micah vi. 3; Deut. xxx. 15.
§ Matt. v. 37; Rom. ii. 4.

considered by him. If it is said that God hardened Pharaoh,* this proves that he was not by nature devoted to hardness of heart, as the gnostics assert. The Epistle to the Hebrews gives us the true solution of this declaration, in the passage in which it speaks of the same rain from heaven fertilising the good ground, and leaving the barren land in its sterility.† Thus the same graces produce effects differing according to the various dispositions of men's hearts. "It is as though the sun were to speak with a voice and say: My beams now melt, now harden, the substances on which they fall. There is nothing in this contrary to right and reason. Does not the same heat liquefy wax and desiccate clay? So in like manner the very same Divine power, acting by Moses, hardened Pharaoh because of his wickedness, and subdued some of the Egyptians, who joined themselves to the Hebrews."‡ While this hardening is the chastisement due to rebellion, it is a mingling of love and justice; for so far from devoting Pharaoh to irremediable ruin, God holds out to him a hope of salvation in the other life, and only smites to heal, for He knew how to bring him back.§ Such is likewise the case of the rebellious and heedless hearers of the word of Christ, upon whom He pronounces such terrible judgments. When God declares by the prophet that He will give a heart of flesh for the heart of stone,‖ this does not imply that our will is to have no share in the change, any more than when He promises by the mouth of the Apostle Paul "to work

* Exod. iv. 21. † Heb. vi. 7. "De Princip.," i. 10.

‡ Ibid., iii. 1-11.

§ Ὁ τῶν ὅλων θεὸς, ὁ εἰδῶς πῶς καὶ τὸν Φαραὼ ἄγει. (Ibid., iii. 14.)

‖ Ezek. xi. 14.

in us to will and to do."* Liberty is, after all, God's first gift to man, and to Him we owe it that we are free spiritual creatures. The ship is saved from the tempest only by the protection of God; nevertheless it would have been lost if the sailors had not toiled at the pumps and in the rigging.† In discussing that formidable chapter, the ninth of the Epistle to the Romans, Origen shows without difficulty that the human clay was not passive in the hands of the potter, since the same apostle declares that "if a man keep himself from evil, he shall be a vessel unto honour in the household of God."‡ He finds, moreover, a convenient means of escape from all difficulties in his doctrine of the pre-existence of souls.

Free will is then the condition of all moral creatures. They are called to a share in the Divine life by the Word. Their number is determined, but it is in their own power to regulate their destiny. According to the choice they make, they will be a very race of gods, or they will fall under the power of evil. They are destined to attain by a spiritual act to their goal, which is in God Himself. They are not, moreover, left to their own strength; they receive divine assistance; grace supports the will of the creature,§ and the Holy Spirit coincides with man's free will, proportioning His gifts according to the manner in which His appeals are received.

This theory of liberty is incomplete upon one important point. Origen does not get beyond the idea of free will. He recognises only that phase of freedom in

* Phil. ii. 13. "De Princip.," iii. 15, 16. † Ibid., iii. 18.
‡ Ibid., iii. 20.
§ "Domini semper auxilio indigemus." ("Select. in. Psalm.," chap. ii. 4, 2, vol. ii. 672.)

which the will is summoned to make its choice. He ignores that second period of the spiritual life, in which, the choice having been made, the good is attained and freedom finds its consummation in the normal development of the being. In other words, he admits only negative liberty, that of conflict and trial, not the positive liberty which consists in the realisation of our moral destiny. Both are of equal importance. Without the power of free choice, good is no longer anything more than a natural necessity; the soul brings forth that which is good, as the ground brings forth the grass and the corn; it loses entirely its moral character. It is absolutely essential, then, that liberty should pass through a period of trial, and be placed in a position to assert its determination. But from another point of view, it is no less necessary that this period should have an end, and the ordeal lead to a definite issue. When the will has decided for good, that choice is no more a revocable act, but a definitely acquired condition of soul. Origen was on the track of the true solution when he established that God possesses the good by His very essence, and cannot by possibility be parted from it. As he could not admit the idea that God was not sovereignly free, he was led to conceive of a higher form of liberty, which was something beyond mere freedom of choice. Had he followed out this thought, he would have discovered that free choice is but the first stage of liberty for the created being. Man, in fact, holds from the first a relative, not an absolute, position; he must accept voluntarily the law of his being and thus fulfil his moral destiny. Free choice is only the preparation for the essential liberty which consists precisely

in this acceptance of the divine law, and in the quiet and continuous development of the true human nature finding its consummation in God. In consequence of this defective view, religious history becomes, in the system of Origen, a drama without a conclusion, which is perpetually recommencing, and, as it were, repeating itself. The brain wearies in watching this restless, ever-revolving whirlpool.

We have seen that all spiritual beings bear a common resemblance as they emerge from the hands of God. This is the inevitable consequence of the system, since all differences among them are supposed to arise from the diversity of their own moral determinations. There exists then, at first, only one spiritual nature made in the image of God, but not partaking of His absolute essence. This nature is destined to fix its own place in the scale of beings. God created, at the same time, matter, not as that heavy and dense corporeality familiar to us, but as a subtle, mobile, malleable substance, capable of assuming any form. "Corporeal nature is subject to the most diversified changes, and can transform itself after any manner. Thus we see wood becoming fire, fire changing into smoke, smoke melting into air."* Matter was created by God in order to give outward form to moral determinations, serving as an envelope to the soul, more or less ethereal or gross, according as its choice is made for good or evil.

There is an entire spiritual history antecedent to what

* "Ex rebus ipsis apparet quod diversam variamque permutationem recipiat natura corporea, ita ut possit ex omnibus in omnia transformari." ("De Princip.," ii. 1, 4.)

we call the creation of the world, and creation is only the result of that which took place before our pale sun shone upon our earth, which is at once a place of punishment and of reparation. Everything in our present existence depends upon acts freely performed in an anterior condition of life, and the position of all beings is determined by their own previous choice. Our existence in this world is the judgment passed upon our existence in an earlier state. All the various conditions, which we observe here, correspond to the same diversity in rational beings, and are all determined by the different measure in which souls have fallen from the primal unity.*

Matter becomes a heavy clog on beings who have fallen most deeply, while it is, as it were, etherealised and made luminous for those of a higher order.† It follows that the sublime commencement of Holy Scripture is a symbol rather than narrative, but a symbol embodying the highest spiritual realities.‡ The fall was universal, though unequal. The first spirit who fell from the divine life was Satan; he grew impatient of the contemplation of the Father, and sought independence; he brought about his ruin by his own free act.§ Pride is the essence of sin, which always consists in the exaltation of self, in the refusal to submit to the Creator, and in severance from the source of life as the necessary consequence.‖ As God alone is good,

* Οὕτω δὲ ποικιλωτάτου τοῦ κόσμου τυγχάνοντος, καὶ τοσαῦτα διάφορα λογικὰ περιέχοντος. τί ἄλλο χρὴ λέγειν αἴτιον γεγονέναι τοῦ ὑποστῆναι αὐτὰ ἢ τὸ ποικίλον τῆς ἀποπτώσεως τῶν οὐχ ὁμοίως τῆς ἑνάδος ἀπορρεόντων. ("De Princip.," ii. 1, 1.)

† Ibid., ii. 2, 2.

‡ "Homil. i. in Genes.," 12, vol. ii. 53.

§ "Contra Cels.," vi. 44.

‖ "Inflatio, superbia, arrogantia peccatum diaboli est, et ob hæc

goodness is identical with absolute being, and sin is a diminution, an enfeebling of the life, a progress towards death, a ceasing to be.* To sin is to die, for it is to be separated from God, and death is nothing but separation from life.

The convulsion caused by the rebellion of Satan was felt by all spirits, but in various degrees; for each one has a separate volition, and is only brought under the influences to which it yields of its own accord. The first consequence of the rebellion among the spirits was corporeal existence. In truth, in separating themselves from God, spirits leave their centre of unity; they become divided and isolated as they enter the domain of matter, which multiplies its forms and displays infinite suppleness in its expression of the various determinations of the spiritual nature. Thus is formed in space the vast graduated scale of beings, every step of the ladder corresponding exactly to the degree of obliquity in the moral creature.

Without dwelling on the fantastic cosmology which Origen derives from the dreams of the Platonists, we shall notice his leading thought of a hierarchy, the gradations of which correspond precisely to the free determinations formed by pure spirits before the existence of this universe. This hierarchy is not unchanging; souls ascend or descend by various grades according to their merits or demerits, perpetually changing forms in the incessant mutation of their moral dispositions, which attain to higher degrees of purity by means of these

delicta ad terras migravit de cœlo. Superbia peccatis omnibus major est." ("Homil. in Ezekiel," ix. 2, vol. iii. 389.)

* Τὸ πονηρὸν καὶ κακὸν οὐκ ὄν. ("In Joann.," book ii. 7, vol. iv. 65.)

very changes, for love being always a co-operative principle with the justice of God, all punishment is at the same time correction, and tends to ameliorate the guilty. "We hold that God, the Father of all beings, has ordered all things (in the existing world) for the salvation of all His creatures, by the ineffable reason of His Word and of His wisdom."* Only the brute creation is excluded from this moving hierarchy, since the moral creature cannot unite itself with the beast, which has no higher soul than that in the blood. Origen positively repudiates the Indian or Pythagorean doctrine of metempsychosis.

At the highest point of the hierarchy of beings are those who have least betrayed their trust. These are those whom the Scripture calls gods. Then come thrones, principalities, and powers, among which Origen places the stars, sun, and moon.† The angels are set over various countries, or they perform certain functions, as Gabriel, who is the angel of war. They thus watch over the inferior creation, as well as over man.‡ If they are fallen, as the fact of their corporeal form, however transparent and glorious it may be, proves that they are, the degradation is very slight: they are at any rate already purified and raised again. They have a law, and will be judged in their turn. The evil angels or demons were the instigators of the universal fall, being led on by Satan, their chief.§ They have a dark

* "Opinamur parentem omnium Deum pro salute universarum creaturarum suarum singula dispensasse." ("De Princip.," ii. 1, 2.)

† "In Joann.," book i. 34, vol. iv. p. 35. "Stellæ rationabiles animantes." (Ibid., i. 7, 3.)

‡ "Angelos officia promeruisse putandum est ex suis meritis." (Ibid., i. 8, 1.)

§ Manifestissime ostenditur cecidisse de cœlo is qui prius erat

body, which is the evidence of their perversity. Enshrouded in this ignominious darkness, they inhabit the regions of the air, and exert a fatal power over mankind.* They form the organised forces of evil, and yet they are not incapable of a return to good.† The righteous hold them in check by their good actions, for holiness breaks their power.‡ Every man has his demon, as each has his good angel: § plagues and lying oracles come from Satan and his angels.

Midway between the demons and the angels is placed a being in whom weakness is joined to grandeur — a true microcosm, bearing at once the impress of a divine origin and the stigma of the Fall. This being is man. In order to understand his original condition, we must go back beyond the Adam of Genesis, who was already fallen to the level of corporeal life. Man, as he appears to us, is no more the direct handiwork of God than angel or demon. He also was originally pure spirit, and the place he now occupies was determined by the part he took in the universal fall: he has sunk lower than the angels, less low than demons. Hence his intermediate position. We must even go further. Although, as a matter of fact, all the members of mankind are alike in their nature, and although all have fallen in the same manner, the differences which we perceive among men prove that there have

Lucifer. Principatum egit in eos qui ejus malitiæ obsecuti sunt." ("De Princip.," i. 5, 5.)

* "Cohortatio ad Martyr.," 45.

† Secundum nos ne diabolus ipse incapax fuit boni. Nulla natura est quæ non recipiat bonum vel malum." ("De Princip.," i. 8, 3.)

‡ "Homil. in Joshua," xv. 6, vol. ii. 434.

§ "Unicuique duo assistunt angeli, alter justitiæ, alter iniquitatis." ("Homil. in Luke," xii. vol. iii. 945.)

been degrees in this universal fall. The disposition of the various nations over the face of the globe, as well as the diversities of individual lot, are all alike determined by acts of the will, which took place before history begins.* Original sin is not a collective thing. It has been committed by all who suffer from its consequences, and those consequences are in exact proportion to the greater or less gravity of the fault.† Character itself is not a fatality of nature; it is a spiritual seed brought from the higher region whence we have fallen. This seed is the product of our antecedent life, and it may be choked or developed, according to our course of life on earth. Speaking of the seed of Abraham, Origen gives it to be understood that those who can claim to be of it are those who have brought with them from a previous life some spiritual nobility. "All men," he says, "do not come into this human life with the germs of the Word hidden in their souls."‡

We have seen that free will retains all its power even in this world of the fallen. Origen admits, however that having once descended, through our own fault, to this earth, we form part of a whole which acts upon us for good or for evil. It is not possible for us to escape prematurely from this influence. This is evident from the doctrine of redemption and of final

* "In initio mundi ita dispersi sunt filii illius Adam sicut illorum merita postulabant." ("In Numer. Homil.," 28, 4, vol. ii. 385.)

† This appears from the curious passage in which Origen speaks of the distinction between animals clean and unclean as the symbol of the diversity of the moral condition of man, which proceeds not from a fatality of nature, but from the determinations of the will. ("In Lev. Homil.," vii. 7, vol. ii. 227.)

‡ Δῆλον ὅτι οὐ πάντες ἄνθρωποι μετὰ σπερματικῶν λόγων τῶν ἐγκαταπαρέντων αὐτῶν ταῖς ψυχαῖς τῷ βίῳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐπιδεδημήκασι. ("In Joann.," book xx. 2, vol. iv. 308.)

restoration, which will not adapt itself to an absolute individualism. The idea of solidarity appears, though but indistinctly, in the system of Origen. He admits the influence of parents over children, and recognises the transmission of evil, not only by natural descent, but also by example.*

Let us look somewhat more closely at man as he appears to us in his actual condition. Though fallen, he yet retains a divine spark within. The Word is asleep within him, like Jesus in the tempest-tossed boat.† This fallen being may become like the angels—like God Himself. ‡ He thus rises from mere resemblance to a complete conformity to the divine type. The germ of the Word in him is his conscience, which is like a sixth sense, the sense of the divine,§ inherent in his higher soul. The corporeal organism, which in its actual form is the punishment of his previous rebellion, is animated by a second soul. This is expressly distinguished from the higher part of our being, which is the spirit.‖ This is a physical soul, as it were. In our present condition, the body is bound to its spiritual part, and cannot sever itself. It is not then in itself evil, though it is the result of the fall. Our appetites are only sinful when they lead us into evil.¶ The

* "Omnes qui in hoc mundo nascuntur non solum nutriuntur a parentibus, sed et imbuuntur et non solum sunt filii peccatorum, sed et discipuli." ("In Rom.," book v. 2, vol. iv. 553.)

† "Adhuc in infidelibus sermo dormitat." ("In Cantic. Homil.," ii. 9, vol. iii. 21.)

‡ "In Levit. Homil.," ix. 11, vol. ii. 244. Σπένδωμεν γενέσθαι θεοί. ("In Joann.," book xx. 23, vol. iv. 347.)

§ "Sensum divinum." ("In Cantic.," i. vol. iii. 42, 43.)

‖ "Anima dici potest sensibilis et mobilis." ("De Princip.," ii. 8, 1.) "Alia sunt quæ sub animæ nomine et alia quæ sub spiritus nomine deputantur." (Ibid., ii. 8, 4.)

¶ Φύσις σώματος οὐ μιαρά. ("Contra Cels.," iii. 42.)

higher soul, or the spirit, ought to rule and govern them, for it is capable of acting upon the inferior soul. Everything depends on the decision of the will, which can triumph over temptation. Origen has only reproduced the triple psychological division of St. Paul: first, the higher soul, which is called the spirit; second, the physical soul; third, the body.*

Man, by the gravity of his sin, has fallen under the empire of Satan, and has introduced evil into the region which he inhabits. † He might have triumphed over it even since his fall, but the power of the demons has become terrible over him. It has gone on growing through his fault, till he has no longer power to resist it;‡ he is lost if he does not receive superhuman aid.§ This superhuman aid is redemption.

§ III. *Redemption.*

The Word is the chief actor in the work of redemption, which is simply the restoration for fallen spirits of the plan of creation. Its object is to bring them back to the divine life, to that state of perfection in God in which they shall be freed from the heavy material frame under which they now groan. The Word is perpetually working for this result. His mercy is more mighty than the power of evil which is against us; He is able to give us back our lost liberty; He bears within Him the divine life, and can restore it to

* "Spiritus, anima, corpus." ("In Exod. Homil.," iii. 3, vol. ii. 137.)

† "Contra Cels.," vii. 28.

‡ Παντὸς ἁμαρτωλοῦ κατατυραννουμένου ὑπὸ τοῦ ἄρχοντος τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου. ("De Oratione," 25.)

§ "In Rom.," book v. 1, vol. iv. 550, 551.

those who by their own fault have forfeited it.* The work of redemption has been going on upon earth without cessation ever since the Fall. The law—the purpose of which is to check the motions of sin, and to reveal the divine justice—is the first manifestation of the Word. He next appeared in the person of the prophets, to shed His brightness upon our moral darkness.† Thus is demonstrated that unity of the two Testaments, which Gnosticism so persistently denied.‡ There cannot be by possibility any opposition between the Old Covenant and the New, as justice opposed to love. These two divine attributes are entirely one. "If goodness is virtue and righteousness, righteousness is, beyond question, also goodness."§ It follows that the God of the law is identical with the God of the Gospel.

The Word does not reveal Himself by oracles only; He acts directly upon the human soul, which sighs after His supreme manifestation.‖ In fact, neither the law nor prophecy is able to overcome error and sin. Man is incapable of rising to the pure light. Hence the Word stoops down to him, to enlighten and teach him obedience. "Who could save the soul of man, and bring it back to the supreme God, but the God-Word, who, being from the beginning with God, became flesh in order to make Himself visible to those

* "De Princip.," i. 2, 4.

† "Per legem purificatio peccatorum cœpit operiri. Mittuntur in auxilium legis prophetæ." ("In Epist. ad Rom.," book v. 1, vol. iv. 550.)

‡ "Unus atque idem Deus legis et Evangeliorum." ("De Princip.," ii. 4, 2.)

§ "Ergo si bonum virtus et justitia virtus est, sine dubio justitia bonitas est." (Ibid., ii. 5, 3.) ‖ "In Cantic.," book i. vol. iii. 37.

who, being bound to and limited by this corporeal nature, could not have seen Him as the Word with God? Speaking with human voice, and preaching in the flesh, He calls these carnal beings to Himself, in order to conform them first to the Word Incarnate, and then to raise them to the vision of that which He was before His humiliation."* He humbled Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death, that He might teach obedience to those who by obedience alone could be saved.† The incarnation itself remains for ever an impenetrable and sublime mystery, which no intellect can comprehend, no words express.‡

This grand doctrine presented indeed special difficulties from the standpoint of the system of Origen. A sincere and earnest Christian, he accepted this central doctrine of the Gospel, and firmly believed that the Son of God had humbled Himself and assumed our inferior nature to restore and save it. He expresses with pathetic eloquence his sense of this act of love. "The Saviour," he says, "abased Himself even into the dust for the love of mankind."§ This is the language of truly Christian feeling; but speculation soon comes in to obscure the view. Origen is too consummate a logician to sacrifice the fundamental principles of his system. Now the first of these principles is the immutability of the Divine life. It is not then ad-

* "Οστις ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ὢν διὰ τοὺς κολληθέντας τῇ σαρκὶ καὶ γενομένους ὅπερ σάρξ, ἐγένετο σάρξ. ("Contra Cels.," vi. 68.)

† "Unigenitus Filius Dei exinanivit semetipsum, obediens usque ad mortem ut obedientiam doceret eos qui non aliter nisi per obedientiam salutem consequi poterant." ("De Princip.," iii. 7, 6.)

‡ Ibid., ii. 6, 2.

§ Διὰ φιλαθρωπίαν ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν. ("Contra Cels.," iv. 15.)

missible that the Word should suffer any degradation; He could neither suffer nor die. Again, the human body is the consequence of sin; it is not simply matter created by God, and which has in itself nothing that is evil; it is the matter which God created rendered dense and gross, as it were, as the result of the evil determinations of the spirit which it holds in deserved captivity. The Word could not then assume directly this gross corporeal nature. Even though He were conceived of the Spirit, still the formation of the human body is the result of antecedent sin. How then could the doctrine of the incarnation be harmonised with this irremediable dishonour of the corporeal life? Origen seeks to escape from this dilemma by means of his singular doctrine of the human soul of Christ. As the Word could not unite itself directly to a body, it unites itself to a human soul, which human soul can without difficulty take up its abode in mortal flesh. This soul becomes therefore, as it were, the mediator between the Godhead and flesh.* This human soul will be truly linked to the clay of which our body is formed; it will share all its weaknesses and pains. It will even experience the bitterness and agony of death, and thus the Word, while remaining Himself impassible and glorious, will be able to communicate eternal life to mankind. Origen applies to the human soul of Jesus his great principle of the classification of beings, which is uniformly the free determination of the will. The human soul which received the honour of being chosen

* "Hac substantia animæ inter Deum carnemque mediante (non enim possibile erat Dei naturam corpori sine mediatore misceri), nascitur Deus homo illa substantia media subsistente." ("De Princip.," ii. 6, 3.)

by the Word was the only one which had merited this honour in the anterior life; it had kept the law of God, and was itself pure from all sin. This spotless purity made it the fit receptacle for the excellence of the Divine life. The heavenly treasure was enclosed in a precious vessel. "As the diversity of souls proceeds from the free choice of each one, according to the degree of love in each for its Creator, so it follows that that soul of which Jesus says, 'No man can take it from Me,' had been joined to Him from the beginning by a strong, indissoluble bond, inasmuch as He is the wisdom and the Word of God, truth, and absolute light. Having thus received Him in His fulness into the very essence of its being, and losing itself, as it were, in His resplendent brightness, this soul became essentially one and the same spirit with Him."*

The defects of this theory are grave and numerous. In the first place it destroys the reality of the union of the Word with our human nature. For this soul that had never sinned cannot be a human soul according to the general principles of Origen's system. Humanity, as we have seen, is a peculiar form of existence which corresponds to a certain moral condition, and this moral condition is characterised by sin. Man was not directly created by God, any more than angel or demon. He was born a pure spirit, like all moral creatures, and he became man as the result of the moral determination which fixed his place in the scale of beings. This perfectly holy soul, then, to which the Word is united, is not a human soul; it does not belong to the

* "Pro liberi arbitrii facultate." ("De Princip.," ii. 6, 3.) Ἐξ ἀνδραγαθήματος τούτου τυχών. (Ibid., ii. 6, 4.)

class of the children of Adam. Again, we fail to understand how such a soul could unite itself to the body, which, while it is not in itself polluted, is nevertheless a form inseparable from sin. If such a union can be conceived because the human soul is capable of change, it is again inconceivable on the ground of its possession of perfect holiness. It is evident that the incarnation of Jesus, as understood by Origen, bears but a very distant resemblance to that which the Gospel presents. The unity of the person of the Redeemer is no less gravely compromised than the reality of the union with humanity: we fall at once into absolute dualism. Origen, comparing the sacrifice of the Cross with the sacrifice of Abraham, identifies the Word—that is to say, the Divine nature of the Redeemer—with the offerer, while Isaac, or the victim, represents the human nature of Jesus.* Only that which was human died on Calvary; the Word retained all the fulness of the Divine life.† The iron glowing red from the action of the fire upon it, symbolises the action of the Divine nature upon the human, which was completely transfused with the Divine fire.‡ The Word in Jesus is like a statue reproduced in miniature, but preserving all its symmetry and beauty of form. His humanity is nothing else than the pedestal of the Divine statue, designed to bring it within the range of our vision.§

In such a conception human nature is not destined to be eternally glorified in the person of Christ; it

* "Ideo ipse et hostia et pontifex. Patitur in carne cujus aries forma est." ("In Genesis," book viii. vol. ii. 83.)

† Ἀπέθανεν ὁ ἄνθρωπος· οὐκ ἀπέθανεν ὁ θεὸς λόγος. ("In Joann.," 28, 14, vol. iv. 397. Comp. Ibid., 6, 35, vol. iv. 152.)

‡ "De Princip.," ii. 6, 6.

§ Ibid., i. 2, 8.

is a transient form, meant to vanish away. The Saviour was man; He is man no longer.* How could it be otherwise, since the climax of history will be a return to its starting-point, which is the unity of spirits in God? Jesus Himself then will return to this unity; He will cast away His humanity as a chrysalis form, by means of which He prepared the full development of the sons of Adam for the glorious day in which, restored to their primal state of pure spirits, they will spread their wings in the regions of light. On this side Origen's system is marred by a subtle docetism. If he admits the reality of the body of Christ, it is subject to his own definition of matter as an essentially mobile and changing substance. Thus he did not hesitate to allow that the body of Jesus may have put on various appearances.† The incarnation, as he represents it, is more nearly allied to the religion of India than to that of the apostles. It would better become Vishnu than Jesus, if the speculative theories of the great Alexandrine doctor were not constantly modified and corrected by the Christian feeling which pervades the whole of his vague metaphysics.

Christ was born of a woman who has preserved her virginity,‡ but who was nevertheless nothing more than a child of Adam. Mary shared in the fall, which is the very condition of human existence.§ The de-

* Εἰ καὶ ἦν ἄνθρωπος, ἀλλὰ νῦν οὐδαμῶς ἐστιν ἄνθρωπος. ("In Jerem. Homil.," xv. 6, vol. iii. 226.)

† "Contra Cels.," iv. 16.

‡ "In Luke Homil.," vii. vol. iii. 940.

§ Even Mary was scandalised at the moment of the passion. "Si autem omnes peccaverunt et egent gloria Dei justificati gratia ejus et redempti, atque et Maria illo tempore scandalizata est." ("In Luke Homil.," xvii. vol. iii. 952.) He expressly admits that Mary, as a member of fallen humanity, needed the sacrifice ap-

velopment of the Divine Child is miraculous in character; He possesses all the wisdom of God from His tenderest years.* His ministry lasts for three years, and to its tragic close the world owes its salvation.† He never succumbs in the conflict. If he at first puts away from Him the cup of woe in Gethsemane, it is only to accept suffering yet more bitter.‡ He lies in the grave, like the victorious lion couching in his lair, and the power of His own divinity suffices to bring His body back to life.§

Let us consider somewhat more closely the character of His redeeming work. There is one obscure point in the doctrine of Origen, namely, the effect which he supposes this work to have upon the whole universe. "Jesus Christ," he says, "is the propitiator of the whole world; universal creation sighs after the grace of the Redeemer, and all things, in their own order, obtain salvation."‖ According to Origen, Christ became also the Saviour of the angels in heaven, assuming their form at the time of His ascension, and thus He is made all things to all.¶ In another aspect, the sacrifice of Calvary is supposed to have produced an effect in these higher regions, as the free

pointed for purification: "Diceremus Mariam, quæ homo erat, purgatione indiguisse post partum." ("In Luke Homil.," xiv. vol. iii. 947.)

* Ibid., xviii. and xix.

† Origen does not limit the ministry of Jesus to one year, for he takes the words, "the year of the Lord," in Luke iv. 19, as having a mystical meaning. (Ibid., xxxii.)

‡ Βαρύτερον αἰτεῖν μαρτυρίον. ("Exhort. ad Martyr.," 29.)

§ "In Numeros Homil.," xvii. 339.

‖ "Jesum propitiatorem non solum credentium, verum et totius mundi." ("In Rom. Comment.," book iii. 8, vol. iv. 516.)

¶ Σαφῶς γέγονεν ἀνθρώποις ἄνθρωπος καὶ ἀγγέλοις ἄγγελος. ("In Joann.," book i. 34, vol. iv. 35.)

offering of love. The sanguinary drama of the cross is supposed to have had its counterpart in a mystical sacrifice, in which the Word made an offering, not of His material blood, but of the holy effluences of His Deity.* It is not possible to attach any clear meaning to these thoughts, which, grand as they are, are very vague. The one distinct impression to be retained is that of an indefinite extension of the redeeming sacrifice. Not only does it produce an effect in heaven above, but in the dark lower regions of Hades,† whither Jesus descended while the sepulchre was closed over Him. There He saved the spirits that did not reject Him. "When His soul was parted from the body, He preached to souls in like manner set free from the corporeal life, and converted to Himself all those who were willing to receive Him."‡ Thus the one sacrifice of Christ was offered for the whole moral creation.§

In treating of the redemption of humanity, Origen defines his thought with more precision. The work of Jesus is first of all an illumination; it enlightens the darkened and defective understanding, by drawing near to it and softening, as it were, the celestial brightness of the Word, which our reason could

* "Non solum pro terrestribus sed etiam pro cœlestibus oblatus est hostia Jesus . . . in cœlestibus vitalem corporis sui virtutem velut spiritale quoddam sacrificium immolavit." ("In Levitic. Homil.," i. 3, vol. ii. 186.)

† John the Baptist went before Jesus into Hades to declare His coming. ("In Luke Homil.," 4, vol. iii. 937.)

‡ *Γυμνῇ σώματος ψυχῇ ταῖς γυμναῖς σωμάτων ὁμίλει ψυχαῖς ἐπιστρέφων κακείνων τὰς βουλομένας.* ("Contra Cels.," ii. 43.)

§ *Μέγας ἀρχιερεὺς, οὐχ ὑπὲρ ἀνθρώπων μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ παντὸς λογικοῦ, τὴν ἅπαξ θυσίαν προσενεχθεῖσαν ἑαυτὸν ανενεγκών.* ("In Joann.," i. 40, vol. iv. 41.)

not endure in its original glory. The incarnation was the culminating point of this illumination, which commenced with the law and the prophets. "Where should we find the fulness of knowledge,* if not in Him of whom the apostle said: 'In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge'? This signifies, as I suppose, that in the soul of Jesus incarnate, the Word of God, or the only Son, and the Holy Spirit do perpetually dwell. The holy soul of Jesus was the mediator between the Trinity and frail humanity."† But to enlighten fallen man was not enough; he needed to be freed from the yoke of the demon which pressed heavily upon him. Hence the supreme importance of the death of the Redeemer. This is not an expiation in the legal sense; the blood of Christ was not shed to appease the divine anger. Origen maintains absolutely the profound agreement between the justice and the love of God. Punishment is never vengeance or mere satisfaction of the wrath of the Most High: its purpose is the purification of the guilty. It is the correcting rod used by the hand of the merciful Father. "If the sufferings inflicted on sinners did not tend to their conversion, the merciful and gracious God would not have attached punishment to crime. The wrath of God has in view the amendment of the guilty; it is intended to heal the sick and to correct even those who have despised His word."‡ The terrible chastisements which come upon

* "Plenitudinem scientiarum." ("In Rom.," book iii. 8, vol. iv. 314.)

† Ibid., book iii. 8.

‡ "Si non esse utile conversioni peccantium adhibere tormenta peccantibus, nunquam misericors et benignus Deus pœnis scelera puniret. Furorem Dei non inutilem ad sanitatem, sed adhuc adhiberi, ut curet ægrotantes." ("In Ezek. Homil.," i. 2, vol. iii. 255.)

some men in the present life, are sent to spare them yet more awful punishment in another. Such is the vengeance of the compassionate God. The end of all His dealings is the extirpation of evil.* The crucifixion of Christ was, therefore, the satisfaction, not so much of the justice, as of the love of God, by realising His glorious designs for the salvation of the world.†

It is in this sense that He is said to have offered Himself to God.‡ Nevertheless, a ransom was paid to Satan, who held us in bondage. We have made ourselves the slaves of the demon; our sins have given us over to him. Christ came to redeem us, when we were serving the master to whom we had sold ourselves. His blood was our ransom. The devil, on the other hand, won us more cheaply. Murder, adultery, theft—with these he bought us.§

"If we ask to whom Jesus Christ gave His soul a ransom for many, we reply—*It was not to God.* It must have been then to the evil one! In truth, the evil one had us in his power until Jesus gave His soul to purchase ours. Satan, on this point, allowed himself to be deceived, believing he could retain the soul of Christ, and not perceiving that he would be unable himself to endure the torments he would

* Τὸ τέλος τῶν πραγματῶν ἀναιρεσθῆναι ἐστι τὴν κακίαν. ("Contra Cels.," viii. 72.)

† Ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ παραδεδόσθαι πρῶτον τὸν υἱὸν ἵνα ἀρὴ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν. ("In Matt. Comment.," xi. 8, vol. iii. 581.)

‡ "Se ipsum obtulit Deo." ("In Levit. Homil.," i. 2, vol. ii. 186.)

§ "Effecti vero sumus servi diaboli secundum quod peccatis nostris vendidati sumus. Homicidum, adulterum, furtum, pecunia diaboli. Christus, pretium nostri sanguinem suum dedit." ("In Exod. Homil.," vi. 9, vol. ii. 150.)

suffer in such a case."* Thus is the triumph of death over Jesus an empty victory; death cannot hold Him, for He has conquered it in its own domain. He even carries with Him in His triumphal train all those earlier captives of the tomb who believed in Him. The divine Lamb has become, by His sacrifice, the salvation of the whole world, for reasons which cannot be uttered. "It is for the love which the Father bears to humanity that the Son submitted to death, redeeming us by His blood from the yoke which our own sins had laid upon us."† Jesus made only His human soul an offering; this alone endured the sufferings of the cross.‡ The divine nature could not feel the touch of sin and death. We have seen, indeed, that the Word made the human soul to which He was united a sacrifice on Calvary, as the high priest offers up the victim. The dying cry of Jesus, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" marks the lowest depth of His humiliation, not the anger of the Father, to whom He committed His divine Spirit.§ Since He had placed this in the hands of His Father, it did not form a part of the ransom paid to the devil. It was, then, the human soul which He offered up, "for the Godhead could not be given as a ransom;"‖ and even this soul, forsaken as it was,

* Τίνι ἔδωκε τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν; οὐ γὰρ δὴ τῷ θεῷ, μή τι οὖν τῷ πονηρῷ; οὗτος γὰρ ἐγκράτει ἡμῶν, ἕως δοθῇ τὸ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν αὐτῷ λύτρον ἡ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ψυχή, ἀπατηθέντι, ὡς δυναμένῳ αὐτὴς κυριεύσαι. ("In Matt.," xvi. 8, vol. iii. 726.)

† Κατὰ τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς φιλανθρωπίαν τὴν σφραγὶν ἀνεδέξατο. ὠνούμενος τῷ ἑαυτοῦ αἵματι ἀπὸ τοῦ ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ἡμᾶς πιπρασκομένους ἀγοράσαντος. ("In Joann.," vi. 36, vol. iv. 152.)

‡ Χωρὶς θεοῦ. (Ibid., xxvii. 14, vol. iv. 393.)

§ "In Matt. Comment.," xvi. 8, vol. iii. 726.

‖ Τὴν θεότητα μηδ' ἂν δεδυνᾶσθαι λύτρον δοθῆναι. (Ibid., xvi. 8, vol. iii. 727.)

proved mightier than the adversary, for it triumphed over him in the gloomy realm of death as upon earth, carrying liberty even there to the sons of Adam.* Thus the devil, who thought to gain the mastery over the Redeemer, found himself defrauded, and had no power to retain even the ransom paid him, as is proved by the resurrection. He lost all right over humanity, while his power was set at nought by the victorious Christ. The legitimate king overcame the tyrant even in his own realm, and trampled his power under foot.

If we ask in what manner the sufferings of the human soul of Jesus achieved this decisive victory, we receive answer that it is by virtue of the holiness they reveal. Without doubt, suffering and death are a sort of acknowledgment and acquittal of the claim which our sins have given to the evil one, but this payment of our debt would not issue in our deliverance if an Almighty moral power was not manifested in these very sufferings of Him who was made like unto us. So true is this, that this holiness, even when imperfectly displayed, as in the martyrdom of the saints, reveals the same virtue and tends to break the power of Satan.† "The cross is the culminating point of the power of martyrdom, as martyrdom is a continuation of the crucifixion. Just as, under the Mosaic law, those who sprinkled the altar with the blood of bulls and of goats were commissioned to declare in the name of God the forgiveness of sins, so the soul of Christians who have suffered death for the name of Jesus pleads before the altar, and becomes the medium of pardon to those who seek it. We know,

* "In Rom.," v. 10, vol. iv. 567. † "Ad Martyr.," 31.

indeed, that as our high priest Jesus Christ made Himself a sacrifice, so the priests who serve under Him yield themselves also as a holy offering, and truly belong to the sanctuary. Who is the blameless priest, who offers a pure sacrifice, if it be not he who witnesses steadfastly a good confession for his Master, even till he has sealed it with a martyr's death."* Again we read: "We must believe that the powers of evil are overcome by the death of the martyrs. Their faithfulness, their perseverance even unto blood, and the ardour of their piety, have weakened the empire of evil, not over themselves alone, but over all mankind. When a man crushes a serpent, he not only delivers himself from a great peril, but he ensures the safety of others also. What must we think of the Lamb of God, who was made a victim, not to take away the sin of some men, but the sin of the world, for which He suffered?"† Plainly, it is the moral character of this sacrifice which gives it its chief value. It exhibits in their full power those very virtues which exert a victorious influence, even when incompletely manifested in the holy death of the confessors. Hence the suffering of Christ, while it is a ransom offered to the devil, is at the same time a holy sacrifice to God. It teaches us obedience, while it redeems from sin.

It is of this sacrifice, thus regarded in its totality, that is to say, not merely as a ransom paid to the demon, but as further the fulfilment of the will of the

* Κατάλυσιν οὖν νομιστέον γίνεσθαι δυνάμεων κακοποιῶν διὰ τοῦ θανάτου τῶν ἁγίων μαρτύρων, τῆς ὑπομονῆς αὐτῶν καὶ τῆς ὁμολογίας μέχρι θανάτου, καὶ τῆς εἰς τὸ εὐσεβὲς προθυμίας ἀμβλυνούσης τὸ ὀξὺ τῆς ἐκείνων κατὰ τοῦ πάσχοντος ἐπιβουλῆς. ("In Joann.," vi. 36, vol. iv. 153, 154.)

† Ibid., vi. 36, 37.

Father, that Origen speaks in such sublime terms. He beholds in it the realisation of all the types of the Old Testament, of all those sanguinary rites which were supposed to possess expiatory and purifying virtue.* Jesus is the true Lamb of God, whose blood saves and purifies. He has taken upon Him all our woes, our sufferings, our sins; He has clothed Himself, as it were, in our defiled garments. He was made sin, by assuming a body like our own.† We have deserved all the reproach, indignity, and evil treatment which He endured for our sake. He drank the cup of our condemnation. If He had not drunk it, our ransom would not have been paid, and our ruin would have been without remedy. Let us then acknowledge in Him the high priest of the New Covenant, who died for us, and let us accept His blood as the ransom for the world.‡ The consummation of the work of salvation was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all the disciples of Christ.§

Such is, in its general tenor, Origen's doctrine of redemption. Closely considered, it produces a very different impression from that formed at the first glance. It is not just to summarise the whole in that singular idea of a fraudulent transaction with the demon. After all, it maintains the objective character of the reparatory sacrifice. Sin has brought in its train our subjection to the devil, who is the personification of all evil and of all

* "In ipsum omnis hostia recapitulatur, in tantum ut, postquam ipse oblatus est, omnes hostiæ cessaverint, quæ eum in typo et umbra præcesserant." ("In Levit. Homil.," iii. 5, vol. ii. 196.)

† "Peccatum quidem non fecit, peccatum tamen pro nobis factus est dum qui erat in forma Dei, in forma servi esse dignatur, dum qui immortalis est moritur." (Ibid., iii. 1, vol. ii. 193.)

‡ Ibid., xii. 1, vol. ii. 249. § "De Princip.," ii. 7, 2.

suffering, since he and his angels have all plagues and sicknesses at their command: death is his minister. He plays the part of the Satan of the Book of Job, who, spirit of evil as he is, yet takes his place among the hosts of the Lord, as subject to His control. He represents the destroying power to which we have sold ourselves by sin. Hence his claim over us is a just claim. In fact, however, as nothing happens without the will of God, he has this right only because it has been conceded to him. It is God who willed that a ransom should be paid him; it is He who ordained that salvation should not be realised without a great and holy sacrifice, the victory of crucified love over sin and condemnation. Unquestionably this sacrifice is not in Origen's view a satisfaction of the anger of God, since with Him justice is inseparable from love. It is also as far removed as possible from the system which sees in the infinite suffering of a God, the sole means of establishing a proportion between the fault and the punishment. We have observed that it separates absolutely the Divine Word from the human soul in the person of Jesus, and that the latter only is the subject of pain and death. The error in Origen's system is this positive dualism, which destroys the oneness of the Redeemer's personality. If he had admitted fully that man is of divine origin, he would not have thus parted the divine element from the human in Jesus; he would have recognised the fulness of humanity in the incarnate and crucified Word. A great truth nevertheless comes out from his system; it is in his view a real man who must offer the atoning sacrifice. The second Adam is alone capable of cancelling the rebellion of the first, and

of renewing the broken bond between earth and heaven; and he can only do this by submitting to all the consequences of the Fall, namely, to suffering and death. This is the ransom paid to the devil. The evil one is defrauded, only because the victim who suffers and dies on the cross triumphs over sin in that very extremity of sorrow and shame which seemed as if it must destroy His work; His apparent defeat is a victory, and His cross a throne. Satan had not foreseen that by this very annihilation of self, by those tears and that blood, holiness would be manifested in all its grandeur, and that the crucified Redeemer would teach men obedience, and by obedience would bring them back to God. Assuredly, this theory is a great advance upon that of Clement, who suppressed almost entirely the objective aspect of the redemption. It owes its imperfections to the fundamental errors of Origen's system. His Christ is, after all, neither God nor man in His sacrifice; the God has withdrawn from Him, and the human soul which suffers and dies on Calvary is a strange thing, raised by its impeccability above humanity, and not corresponding to that grade of the moral ladder on which the race of Adam is by its transgression placed. But if we forget for a moment the errors of the logician, if we listen to Origen only as a Christian, and consider simply the noble aspects of this doctrine of redemption, we find in it precious elements which only need to be disengaged from the Platonic idealism of the great Alexandrine, to form a large and suggestive synthesis.

One very beautiful part of Origen's system is that which treats of the work of the Redeemer since the resurrection. Enfranchised thenceforward from the

limitations which the conditions of terrestrial life imposed upon His action, He returns into the heavens, only to exercise on behalf of the Church the saving power of a divine love. His death, like the celestial fire which consumes the holocaust, causes all that was corporeal, external, local merely, to vanish from His work, which He now carries on in the fulness of His divine power.* He gives Himself to all and to each, and while He is sometimes tender, sometimes severe, His influence is ever gracious and sanctifying. The rod of repression in His hands is like the rod of Aaron, which in the end breaks forth in blossom.† He destroys evil by the breath of His mouth. A purifying virtue proceeds from Him, which will consume sin in the heart of the Christian, as the fire of the altar consumed the flesh of the victim.‡ His holy life during the time of His sojourn here below abides as the model of perfection.§ His miracles symbolise the powerful operations of His eternal mercy. He belongs no longer to a little group of disciples only; since His death He belongs to the whole world, and to all worlds. He is wisdom, truth, holiness, righteousness, strength, the essential good and the true life.‖

§ IV. *Conversion and the Christian Life.*

It will be anticipated that Origen will insist strongly upon the appropriation of salvation. His spiritual con-

* "Omnia hæc quæ in corpore a salvatore gesta sunt, cœlestis ignis absumsit et ad divinitatis ejus naturam cuncta restituit." ("In Levit.," i. 4, vol. ii. 187.)

† "In Joann.," i. 41. ‡ "In Levit. Homil.," v. 3, vol. ii. 207.

§ Παράδειγμα ἀρίστου βίου. ("Contra Cels.," i. 68.)

‖ "Ad Rom.," iv. 7, vol. iv. 533.

ception of the reconciliation forbids him to entertain the idea of any merely external imputation. If Christ has conquered sin and the devil, it is not to make us sharers in His triumph without any personal effort or any battle of our own. We are called to a share in the salvation, by becoming sharers in the holiness of the Redeemer. It is He who makes this holiness possible to us, first by what He did and suffered to break the yoke of Satan, and then by His Spirit. He alone transforms our nature, and the basis of this transformation consists in our being united to Him in His death and in His life by love—the sole source of light and holiness. We must begin by smiting on our breast. The part assigned to repentance in the appropriation of salvation is an important one. It is like Elias, or John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Saviour, preparing the way for Him.* The redeeming work is null and of no avail wherever repentance is wanting, for light has no connection with darkness. He who but half repents, has but a half salvation;† we are bidden to die with Christ.‡ Repentance must be earnest, deep, and renewed with every fresh sin.§ It has therefore a permanent part to play in the Christian life, as a purifying power, and there is no sin for which it will not secure pardon, even after conversion, at least in the sight of God.‖ It expresses itself in honest

* "In Luke Homil.," iv. vol. iii. 937.

† "Pro mensura pœnitentiæ, remissionis quantitas moderatur." ("Select. in Psalm.," ii. vol. ii. 697.)

‡ "Non enim unusquisque ipse sibi dat, sed a Christo sumit mortis exemplum, qui solus peccato mortuus est, ut et ipse imitatione ejus possit alienus et mortuus effici a peccato." ("Ad Rom.," ix. 39, vol. iv. 661.)

§ "In Cantic.," 6, vol. iii. 15.

‖ "Novum hoc bonitatis est genus ut etiam post adulterium

confession before our brethren, and in real amendment, for if it does not bring forth fruit it is idle and useless.* Repentance leads to faith, which begins with the knowledge of Christ — a knowledge which becomes increasingly pure and elevated, till it rises from the contemplation of the visible to that of the invisible and glorified Christ.† The true knowledge is not merely intellectual; it possesses its object; it is love, and produces the divine life and holiness. We love the God in Christ with all our heart and soul.‡ This love is at the same time obedience: it kindles a flame within us, and constrains us to forsake all for the Master. Just as repentance unites us to the Christ crucified, so does real faith, manifested by holy service, unite us to the risen Christ.§ Thus justification is consummated in sanctification, and the two cannot be disjoined. Justifying faith is the inward work of love, as opposed to the purely external work of Pharisaism. "There are two justifications—the one which the apostle connects with works, the other with faith. The former derives its glory from itself, not from God; the second derives it from God alone, who reads the heart of man, and who alone knows who is he that believes and he that believes not. The outward work is manifest and obvious to all. But those who are circumcised in the inward man, who are Jews according to the spirit, not

revertentem tamen et ex toto corde pœnitentem suscipiat animam." ("In Exod. Homil.," viii. 5, vol. ii. 160.)

* "In Psalm. Homil.," xxxvii. 6, vol. ii. 688.

† "In Cantic.," book iii. vol. iii. 84.

‡ "Diliges dominum tuum in Christo." ("In Luke Homil.," xxv. vol. iii. 963.)

§ "Novitas vitæ qua in Christo per fidem resurrectionis ejus vivimus, domino deputatur." ("Ad Rom.," ix. 39, vol. iv. 661.)

according to the letter, cannot receive their honour from men, but from God only."* The great defect in the whole of this theory of justification consists in the small place it assigns to the pardon of God. The work of Christ opens to us the way of regeneration, but this is not for the Christian a treasury of grace already won, which he appropriates by faith. It is this work of Christ indeed which restores life to us, and yet we have not received from His hands our letter of pardon. Thus we are never entirely saved on this side the grave; we are destined to fresh purifications after death, which will be adapted to our moral condition.† We must bear in mind that, according to Origen, we shall always be liable, as free creatures, to fall back into evil. Heaven can never then be said to be securely gained.

With these limitations, the importance of which we frankly avow, Christian morality is treated in Origen's system in a true and dignified manner. It all springs from Jesus Christ, who is called the substance of the virtues.‡ "Every soul attracts to itself and receives in itself the Word of God in the measure of its faith. When souls have thus drawn to themselves this divine Word, and have allowed it to penetrate their every thought and feeling; when they have breathed its perfume, they are filled with joy and power, and run after Him."§ Every good or evil action is so in its final

* "Palam est et videri oculis potest quidquid opere manifestum est. Hi qui secundum interiorem hominem circumciduntur, horum laus et gloria non apud homines, sed apud Deum." ("Ad Rom.," iv. vol. iv. 521.)

† "De Princip.," ii. 11, 6. "In Jerem. Homil.," vii. 1, vol. iii. 167.

‡ "Virtutum substantiam Christum soleamus accipere." ("In Cantic.," i. vol. iii. 45.)

§ "Trahit unaquæque anima et assumit ad se verbum Dei, pro capacitatis et fidei suæ mensura." (Ibid., i. vol. iii. 41.)

relation to Jesus Christ. The false Christians, who forget Him in their care for the riches and concerns of this world, place afresh upon His brow the crown of thorns.*

The inward life is that which is of the most importance, for our actions are the fruit and manifestation of this inner principle. Purity of spirit and of conscience makes all actions pure. Even participation in meat forbidden by the law, is no longer a thing to be carefully shunned, in spite of the scandal it creates among the Jews.† It is at the heart that God looks, for there is the source of evil and good, and in the heart both are virtually wrought. Outward things change their character to us according to our disposition towards them, and this alone is of importance. The essence of holiness is love, which has its counterpart in hatred of evil.‡ This alone ripens and confirms true piety. Love brings liberty; it frees us from the law of the letter, and raises us far above the Pharisaism which strains at a gnat and swallows a camel, making that which is secondary ever subordinate to that which is essential in the practice of right. Love is the parent of the true virtues,—which are self-denial, devotedness, justice, and mercy.§ We are no longer the slaves of a law of coercion, but belong to that higher spiritual jurisdiction, which is directly under the inspiration of the eternal Word.

The new law does not exclude asceticism, but it does not attach any intrinsic value to it, nor accredit it with

* "In Joann.," i. 12, vol. iv. 13, 14.
† "In Matt.," book xi. 12, vol. iii. 495.
‡ "In Rom.," ix. 5, 6, vol. iv. 651.
§ "Comment. Series in Matt.," 19, vol. iii. 843.

any virtue except as facilitating the triumph of the soul over the body. The Christian does not fast because fasting was a command under the Old Covenant, but of his own free will. Again, he does not forget that the truly acceptable fast is humility of spirit and abstinence from sin, and that it is not confined to limited and set times. "If thou wilt fast in the spirit of Christ, that is to say, if thou wilt humble thy soul, know that every moment of the year is favourable for such a fast, and that thy whole life should be a day of humiliation. Fast by abstaining from all sin; put away from thee the food of malice, and the draughts of self-indulgence, and refrain thy lips from the intoxicating cup of luxury."* Origen, like Clement and Irenæus, does not admit any essential distinction among days. The Jewish Sabbath has disappeared, and the entire life should be a remembrance of Christ. "O ye," he exclaims, "who come to church only on festival days, tell me if other days are not also feast days, days of the Lord? It is for the Jews to observe special and set days. God hates those who will honour only one day as the day of the Lord."† There are no more any consecrated places than any days set apart in an exclusive sense. Christianity knows but one altar—the believing heart."‡ We are surprised to find some inconsistencies in a morality bearing the impress of so high a spirituality. The

* "Totius vitæ tuæ dies habeto ad humiliandam animam tuam. Jejune ab omni peccato." ("In Levit. Homil.," x. 2, vol. ii. 245, 246.)

† "Odit ergo Deus qui unum diem putant festum diem esse Domini." ("In Genes. Homil.," x. 3, vol. ii. 88. Comp. "Select. in Exod.," vol. ii. 127; "In Numeros Homil.," 23, 2, vol. ii. 357.)

‡ "Non in aliquo loco quæramus Deum." ("In Genes. Homil.," iii. 3, vol. ii. 95.)

prohibition of using strangled beasts as food is regarded as permanent.* Second marriages, if they are not forbidden, are severely reprobated.† Christians are charged to keep aloof from public offices.‡ Military service is forbidden to the disciples of the meek and gentle Master, if they will be true to their name of children of peace, for under no pretext is it permitted to a Christian to cause the death of a man.§ Assuredly a spirit as liberal as that of Origen would not have maintained these restrictions in a time when the state did not rest on pagan foundations. How much greater wisdom did St. Paul display in recognising the lawfulness of the civil order, regarded in itself? In Origen's view, the frequenting of circuses and of theatres is a sin. The soul there catches fire from the altars of Satan, by becoming the prey of those strong passions which scenic representations awaken.‖ The Christian may not take any oath.¶ We wonder again to find Origen admitting the lawfulness of lying in extreme cases, as, for instance, in connection with the healing of the sick.** Progress in holiness is secured by spiritual exercise, as agility of body results from a constant use of the limbs. Jesus Christ is ever present to wash the feet of His disciples, and to purify them from the dust of the way.†† Thus the new man grows in strength and stature; faith unites itself more closely with its object, and becomes science, or the deeper knowledge

* "In Roman.," book ii. 13, vol. iv. 492.
† "In Luke Homil.," 17, vol. iii. 953.
‡ "Contra Cels.," viii. 73.
§ Ibid., iii. 7.
‖ "In Levit. Homil.," ix. 9, vol. ii. 243.
¶ "In Matt. Comment. Series," 16. vol. iii. 841.
** "Contra Cels.," iv. 19.
†† "In Joann.," 32, 2, vol. iv. 405.

of the truth. We are made a sacrifice with Christ, and share in His priesthood. Almsgiving is a true sacrifice; martyrdom is another, which possesses in some measure the purifying virtue of the crucifixion, and tends to break the power of the demons. Mortification and charity are special sacrifices, far higher than those offered by Israel.* Jesus accepts these sacrifices, which are consumed upon the inward altar by the fire of love, and He makes them a part of His own sacrifice. In truth, we give to God only that which He has Himself given us. It is the spiritual sacrifice which is alone of value; every other is worthless. "Each one of us has in himself his own sacrifice, and the fire on that altar of sacrifice is ever burning. If I give up all I possess, if I take up my cross to follow Jesus Christ, I offer a sacrifice on the altar of my God. If I love my brethren so as to give my life for them, if I fight even to the death for righteousness and truth, I present my sacrifice on the altar of my God. If I mortify every lust of the flesh, if the world is crucified to me and I to the world, I have offered my sacrifice on the altar of my God, and I have been the priest of my own holocaust.† It is thus that the priesthood is exercised in the outer porch where the victims are offered. Then, as a priest clothed in holy garments, I pass from that outer sanctuary, within the veil, into that holy place, into which, as Paul says, Jesus has entered, and which is not a holy place made with hands, but heaven itself. Thinkest thou my Lord, who is the High Priest, will

* "Hoc modo inveniris tu verius et perfectius secundum evangelium offerre sacrificia." ("In Levit. Homil.," ii. 4, vol. ii. 191.)

† "Ipse meæ hostiæ sacerdos efficior." ("In Luke Homil., ix. 9, vol. ii. 243.)

not deign to receive from me a portion of my poor offering, which He will present to the Father in His own name? Thinkest thou He will not find some feeble spark in the fire of my sacrifice to consume it in His censer, and to offer it to the Father as a sweet smelling savour?"*

§ V. *The Church. Worship. The Sacrament. The End of all Things.*

Origen does not forget that the religious life is not simply something to be realised by the individual, but that its design is also to form a Christian society. The part taken by him in the ecclesiastical struggles of his age, and the persecutions he endured from the representatives of the hierarchy, sufficiently indicate the breadth of his point of view. The distinction between the Church visible and invisible is implied in his views of penitence. The Christian who has committed some fault of exceptional gravity may always find pardon and restoration in Christ, though he can be but once reinstated in the Church.† It follows that there exists above and beyond the Church on earth, a spiritual and invisible order which cannot be absolutely confounded with that which is visible. Restorations to or excom-

* "In Luke Homil.," ix. 9, vol. ii. 243.

† "In gravioribus enim criminibus semel tantum pœnitentiæ conceditur locus." ("In Levit.," xv. 2, vol. ii. 262.) The proof that God pardons that which the Church does not pardon, is that adultery is placed by Origen among the sins, the repetition of which incurs final exclusion from the Church ("De Oratione," 28, vol. i. 256), while he says elsewhere that Jesus Christ pardons this like other sins. ("In Exod.," viii. 5, vol. ii. 160.) This distinction, moreover, comes out clearly from his doctrine of the final restoration of every moral creature.

munications from the visible Church extend only to the outer domain, which is all that is open to the eye of man, and there is no necessary ratification of these decisions by the great Head of the whole Church, who searches the hearts. The Christian soul may appeal from the judgment of men to the tribunal of Christ. Hence ecclesiastical power is limited to the outward and earthly, and does not extend to the substance of things. The true Church goes further than the visible Church, and is not bound by its judgments. A large door is thus opened to the liberty of souls, and the theocratic notion is deprived of its most powerful element.

It is in virtue of these same principles that Origen rejects anything like a restoration of an exclusive priestly caste. He establishes the universal priesthood of Christians. "The disciples of Christ," he says, "are true priests."* Every Christian is an apostle. If the Saviour sends a man to labour for the salvation of his brethren, that man is an apostle.† The office is nothing without the moral qualities which it demands. A bishop without a calling is not a bishop.‡ In every Christian soul there is a sanctuary where the Holy Spirit fulfils all His priestly functions.§ Free access to the Master is granted to all believers. The Samaritans who came to Christ carefully distinguished between

* "Discipuli sui, veri sacerdotes." ("In Levit.," vii. 1, vol. ii. 220.)

† "Ὃν ἐὰν ἀποστέλλῃ ὁ σωτὴρ διακονησάμενον τῇ τινων σωτηρίᾳ, ὁ ἀποστελλόμενος ἀπόστολός ἐστιν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. ("In Joann.," 32, 10, vol. iv. 431.)

‡ "Si quis dicit se esse sacerdotem Dei, nisi habeat pectus (sacerdotis) non est sacerdos." ("In Levit.," v. 12, vol. ii. 214.)

§ "Potest unusquisque nostrum etiam in semet ipso constituere tabernaculum." (Ibid., 9, 4, vol. ii. 164.)

faith and the preliminary belief which they derived from the saying of the woman of Sychem. They knew what it was to believe after they had heard the Christ themselves, and found that He was indeed the Saviour of the world. "It is better to have a direct view of the Word, and to hear His teaching for ourselves, than simply to receive it from the lips of His servants who have seen Him, without beholding Him with our own eyes and being enlightened by His power."* The Church is not a hierarchy; it has no visible head upon earth. The rock on which it rests is Jesus Christ. Every Christian may be called by the name of the apostle—Cephas—if he has faith. "Jesus Christ is the rock.† All the followers of Christ have a right to this name."‡ There is then no exclusive privilege conveyed to the apostle to whom these words were for the first time addressed. The whole Church is built, not upon his person, but upon his faith, which is the faith of all believers.§ Lastly, the Church may only use in its own defence the peaceful sword of the Spirit.‖

The sacrament has no intrinsic value. The water of baptism cannot communicate the Holy Spirit by a sort of virtue inherent in itself. "He who receives the baptism of water does not necessarily receive the Holy Spirit."¶ If any one comes to baptism still in his sins,

* Βέλτιον ἔστιν αὐτόπτην γενέσθαι τοῦ λόγου ἤπερ μὴ ὁρώντα αὐτὸν διακόνων τῶν ἑορακότων αὐτὸν ἀκούειν τὸν περὶ αὐτοῦ λόγον. ("In Joann.," xii. 52, vol. iv. 265.)

† "Petra Christus est.") "In Numer. Homil.," 19, 3, vol. ii. 345.)

‡ Ἡ πέτρα οὖν ὁ Χριστός· πάντες οἱ Χριστοῦ μιμηταὶ, πέτρα γίνονται. ("In Jerem.," xvi. 2, 3, vol. iii. 229.)

§ "In Matt.," xii. 10, 11, vol. iii. 523, 525.

‖ "Gladium spiritus." ("In Matt. Comment. Series," 101, vol. iii. 907.)

¶ "Qui accipit aquam non accipit Spiritum sanctum; qui lavatur

he does not therein receive the forgiveness of his faults.* Baptism is but a symbol;† the invocation of the Trinity is that which imparts to it all its virtue.‡ Children may receive holy baptism as a sign of the regeneration of which every human being stands in need.§

The Lord's Supper is not a material sacrifice, for there is no place for any such offering in the New Covenant, which recognises no other sacrifice than that of the cross.‖ The elements used in the sacrament undergo no change. The soul is fed in the Lord's Supper by the blood and body of the Word "which are His sayings."¶ Let us not seek anywhere else the bread which comes down from heaven, the mystic vine from which flows the holy beverage of the Christian soul. "It was not then the bread which He held in His hands which Jesus called His body, nor was the cup which He passed to His disciples really His blood. No, He always intended by it the Word which nourishes in salutem, et aquam accipit et Spiritum sanctum." ("In Ezek. Homil.," 6, 5, vol. iii. 378.)

* "Si quis peccans ad lavacrum venit, ei non fit remissio peccatorum." ("In Luke Homil.," 21, vol. iii. 957.)

† Τοῦ ὕδατος λουτρὸν, σύμβολον τυγχανὸν καθαρσίου ψυχῆς. ("In Joann.," book vi. 17, vol. iv. 133.)

‡ Τῆς δυνάμεως τῆς προσκυνητῆς τριάδος ἐπικλήσεων. (Ibid., vi. 17, vol. iv. 133.)

§ "Ecclesia ab apostolis traditionem suscepit etiam parvulis baptismum dare. Sciebant enim quod essent in omnibus genuinæ sordes peccati, quæ per aquam et Spiritum ablui deberent." ("In Rom.," v. 9, vol. iv. 565.)

‖ "Possunt sacrificia spiritaliter offeri, quæ modo carnaliter non possunt." ("In Exod.," xi. 6, vol. ii. 171; "In Levit. v. 7, vol. ii. 210.) "In his omnibus unus est agnus qui totius mundi potuit auferre peccatum et ideo cessaverunt cæteræ hostiæ. Ideo spiritalia sacrificia jugulemus." ("In Numeros," 24. 1, vol. ii. 363.)

¶ "Bibere dicimur sanguinem Christi, non solum sacramentorum ritu, sed et cum sermones ejus recipimus, in quibus vita consistit." (Ibid., 16, 9, vol. ii. 334.)

the heart."* Thus He could rejoice in the thought of breaking this purely spiritual bread again in the kingdom of His Father.† The elements of the sacrament are but symbols, from which only a living faith can derive benefit. "The bread of the Lord only does good to him who partakes of it with a pure heart and upright conscience." It is not the fact of abstaining from this bread which is our ruin, but the reason of such abstinence, which is our persistence in evil. "That which is of benefit to us in the Supper is not the material bread, but the prayer which has been uttered over it; the ordinance does good only to him who observes it not unworthily. This is all we have to say as to the typical and symbolical body of Christ."‡ "In truth, we eat the body and drink the blood of the Word when we hear and receive His words. That man has truly eaten His flesh who has apprehended His deepest teachings."§

We have seen that Origen sought only in his system to grasp the doctrine of Scripture as it was understood in the Church of his time. Thus he fully admits, in principle, the authority of the sacred book, and acknowledges no other; he does not bow to any tradition, nor will he submit to any but God alone. "What is it to me," he exclaims, "that

* "Non enim panem illum visibilem, quem tenebat in manibus, corpus suum dicebat Deus Verbum, sed Verbum in cujus mysterio fuerat panis ille frangendus; nec potum illum visibilem sanguinem suum dicebat, sed Verbum, in cujus mysterio potus ille fuerat effundendus." ("In Matt. Comment. Series," 85, vol. iii. 898.)

† Ibid., 86, vol. iii. 897.

‡ Οὐχ ἡ ὕλη τοῦ ἄρτου, αλλ' ὁ ἐπ' αὐτῷ εἰρημένος λόγος ἐστὶν ὁ ὠφελῶν τὸν μὴ ἀναξίως τοῦ κυρίου ἐσθίοντα αὐτὸν, καὶ ταῦτα μὲν περὶ τοῦ τυπικοῦ καὶ συμβολικοῦ σώματος. ("In Matt.," xi. 14, vol. iii. 500.)

§ "In Exod.," vii. 7, vol. ii. 155.

a thousand men affirm a theory to be true, if it is condemned by the word of God? What avails it me that many Churches have come to an agreement upon a certain doctrine, if they have all been led astray by heresy? That which I desire above all things is that God should confirm my words, and this confirmation He gives them by the testimony of Holy Scripture."* These constitute for Origen the supreme authority. Like a harp of many strings, these merge all diversities in one grand harmony;† they unite the gentle and the severe, as justice and mercy are blended in God.‡ Origen seems to believe in verbal inspiration in the most absolute sense. Just as every portion of the plant has a significance to the botanist, so each iota of the sacred canon has a special value in his eyes.§ He seeks to reconcile all divergences of detail;‖ he does not hesitate to multiply the miracles of Jesus Christ, in order to remove trifling contradictions.¶ He even goes so far as to suppose that the gospels have intentionally neglected historical accuracy in order to enrich the spiritual meaning.** In other passages he modifies the extravagance of his notion of inspiration; he does not make it extend to the correctness of the language employed, for he points out the solecisms in the sacred

* "Hoc est quod quæritur, ut Dominus sermonum meorum testis assistat, ut ipse comprobet quæ dicuntur sanctarum testimonio scriptarum." ("In Ezek.," ii. 5, vol. iii. 364.)

† "In Matt.," i. 2, vol. iii. 441.

‡ "In Jerem. Homil.," i. 16, vol. iii. 135.

§ Οἶμαι ὅτι καὶ πᾶν θαυμάσιον γράμμα τὸ γεγραμμένον ἐν τοῖς λογίοις τοῦ θεοῦ ἐργάζεσθαι, καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἰῶτα ἓν, ἢ μία κεραία γεγραμμένη ἐν τῇ γραφῇ, ἥτις οὐκ ἐργάζεται τὸ ἑαυτῆς ἔργον. ("In Jerem.," 39, vol. iii. 286.)

‖ "In Joann.," 6, 18, vol. iv. 134.

¶ "In Matt.," 16, 12; "In Matt. Comment. Series," 77, vol. iii. 732, 892.

** "In Joann.," x. 3, vol. iv. 163.

writers.* He does not hesitate to affirm that Moses inserted ordinances of his own invention in the law of God—a theory which implies a distinction between the word of God and Scripture.† If, like Justin Martyr, he compares the sacred writers to a harp, which vibrates under the hand of the player, he affirms that the Holy Ghost never yet animated a perverse spirit, although it may be that wicked men, like Balaam and Caiphas, may have had a certain knowledge of the future, proceeding from an inspiration of a lower order, possibly even diabolical. Origen thus assigns a place to the moral element, although logically his theory of inspiration required the complete passivity of its subject.‡ He establishes degrees in inspiration, placing the gospels above the epistles.§ The inspiration of the apostles is distinguished from that of later Christians rather in degree than in kind. "We have not," says Origen, "the Holy Spirit in such full measure."‖ We are then justified in concluding that if Origen's dictum upon inspiration is narrow, he often gives it expansion, and that in fact his views exhibit much vagueness and uncertainty. His theory of literal inspiration laid very light fetters upon him, for his conception of the threefold meaning of Holy Scripture allowed him to discover in it almost what he would. He shows no more exactness in his conception of the canon. On the one hand,

* "In Joann.," iv. 1, 2, vol. iv. 93.

† "Per Moysen quidem multa locutus est Deus, aliquanta tamen et Moyses propria auctoritate mandavit." ("In Numeros Homil.," 16, 4, vol. ii. 330.)

‡ "In Joann.," 28, 13, vol. iv. 388.

§ "In Joann.," i. 5, vol. iv. 4.

‖ "Nobis non est tanta Spiritus abundantia." ("In Cantic. Proleg.," iii. 36.)

he allows Christian science to have a voice in its determination. Men are to be good and faithful stewards of the divine treasure,* carefully guarding against any false coinage. On the other hand, in his curious letter to Julius Africanus, on the apocryphal "Book of Susannah," he inclines to the idea of a providential and indisputable canon, asserting that we have no right to diminish the treasure of the Church.†

Origen displays all his originality and boldness of conception in his doctrine of the consummation of all things. He first treats of our condition after death. The soul of the good is carried into an earthly paradise, which, however, still belongs to our world, and forms a solitary island. This is the first place of purification, but is far superior to any we have known during our bodily existence.‡ The soul then enters an intermediate paradise, where it undergoes a second purification. Then, as it becomes freed from all that defiled it, it rises in the pure ether to God.§ The souls of the wicked are subjected in Hades to cruel torments, but these have also a purifying virtue.‖ The fire which devours them is no flame of earth; sin is its own chastisement, and its memory alone is sufficient punishment of the guilty. Apart from this purely individual history of souls, the kingdom of God has its development upon earth. Antichrist will, in the end of the ages, reunite all the forces of evil for one final conflict.¶ After this will come the judgment,

* Δόκιμοι τραπέζιται. ("In Luke Homil.," i. vol. iii. 932.)

† "Letter to Africanus," 4, vol. i. 16.

‡ Origen calls this first place of trial "Schola animarum." ("De Princip.," ii. 11, 6.)

§ Ibid., ii. 11, 6.

‖ "In Exod.," vi. 4, vol. ii. 148.

¶ "Contra Cels.," vi. 46.

and the end of the world inaugurated by the return of Christ. All the prophetic symbols of this event, however, are to be spiritualised. If Israel is to share like other nations in the glories of the future, no idea must be entertained of its local and material restoration. To compare the heavenly Jerusalem to a city built of stone is nothing short of blasphemy.* Let us put aside all these old-wives' fables invented by the Jews,† and picture to ourselves the return of the Word in its true aspect. He will return, not materially, but spiritually. Our world will not be preserved, but renovated, to receive a glorious humanity, clothed in ethereal bodies.‡ It may be said that Christ has truly come again in His glory, when the manifestation of His divinity shall be so overwhelming that not only none of the righteous, but no sinner shall be able to doubt what He really is.§ Nor will this be the full consummation. That will only come when God shall be all in all, that is, when spirits fully discharged from their oppressive prison shall return to their primitive unity,—evil being abolished not by annihilation, but by the conversion of the wicked. Then creation will have realised its eternal idea, as that is found in the Word. "The love of God by Christ will bring all creatures to the same end, His enemies themselves being vanquished and subdued, for the end is to be as the beginning."‖ As we

* "In Levit. Homil.," xii. 3, vol. ii, 249.

† Γραωδῶς καὶ ἰουδαϊκῶς. ("In Joann.," v. 26, vol. iv. 206.)

‡ "In Matt.," 12, 35, vol. iii. 556.

§ "In Matt. Comment. Series," 70, vol. iii. 889.

‖ "In unum finem putamus quod bonitas Dei per Christum suum universam revocet creaturam subactis et subditis etiam inimicis." ("De Princip.," i. 6, 1.) "Semper enim similis est finis

have observed, however, this final restoration has no guarantee of permanency. The liberty of the creature will always make it possible for him to stake and lose his destiny of bliss, while still evil shall never ultimately triumph over good, the final utterance being ever that of victorious love.* It is, in fact, a circle which is never completed, or rather a sphere perpetually revolving through the countless ages of eternity.

Such is this sublime system,—the mightiest effort of Christian thought in that age of fervour and freedom. Our exposition has brought out both its beauties and its imperfections. The great Christian philosopher of Alexandria represents to us another Magian king bringing to the cradle at Bethlehem all the treasures of ancient culture. These treasures are not all of equal value; but they are all a holy offering, and the purest incense rises from his adoring heart to the Word. With all its errors, this comprehensive synthesis is in its essence an act of worship. Adoration is at least the feeling which inspires it from first to last.

initiis." ("De Princip.," i. 6, 2.) See on the doctrine of final causes: "De Princip.," iii. 6.

* Ibid., iii. 6.

CHAPTER V.

CONTINUATION OF THE ALEXANDRINE SCHOOL. THE DISCIPLES OF ORIGEN.

ORIGEN'S influence continued considerable in the Eastern Church during the whole course of the third century. Even at Alexandria, where he had encountered such sharp and unjust opposition, no spiritual authority could be compared with his; and his most illustrious disciple, Dionysius the Great, occupied the first see of the Egyptian Church. This is conclusive proof that his teaching was not incompatible with the general faith of the Church before Nicæa. Those who have accused him of heresy have applied to him, by a sort of theological retroaction, rules which were not of his age. The weak and dangerous points of his doctrine were brought into prominence by his disciples in accordance with that law of the history of thought which carries every idea to its logical consequences, and constrains it, in a manner, to reveal all its latent defectiveness and error. Origen had insisted upon the subordination of the Son to the Father more strongly than any of his predecessors, while still maintaining the eternal pre-existence of the Word; but that pre-existence lost much of its value when it was admitted that creation also could boast of eternal duration. The Word was,

in fine, less necessary to God than to the world, of which it was at once the idea and the principle, the prototype and the active cause. The school of Origen was not always able to maintain itself at the precise point which the master made his ultimatum. More than once it went beyond it, and yet it cannot justly be accused of Arianism. It happily remained faithful to its bold and generous spirituality, especially in relation to the interpretation of the prophecies, and it steadily resisted the materialism of the millenarians. It also preserved the tradition of extensive Biblical studies, and it gave further development to the principles of criticism, which Origen applied with a timidity occasioned by his profound respect for Holy Scripture.

§ I. *Pierius, Gregory Thaumaturgus, Theognostus.*

Pierius, who had the honour to be a successor of the two great masters of the catechetical school of Alexandria, and who, for his learning and eloquence, deserves to be called a second Origen, is known to us only by the very partial estimate of Photius.* The praise awarded to him by this rigid exponent of orthodoxy, "as having spoken piously of the Father and the Son," suggests that he must have passed over in silence the subordination of the Word. The Son, according to him, shares in all the glory of the Father, since the image cannot differ

* See Dorner and Baur (works quoted) on the various histories of dogma, and especially their authorities. (Photius, "Bibliotheca," cod. 119; Routh, "Reliquiæ," iii. p. 425, and following.)

from the prototype.* On the other hand, Pierius strangely lowered the position of the third person of the Trinity.† An adherent of the doctrine of the pre-existence of souls, he made large use of the allegorical method in the interpretation of Scripture.

Gregory Thaumaturgus carried his affection for the great Alexandrine to the pitch of enthusiasm, as we may judge by the panegyric he passes upon him.‡ He does not always use exact and correct language in reference to the relation of the Son with the Father. He maintains that they are one in substance, and distinct only in thought.§ The Trinity thus understood resolves itself into a mere logical thesis, and the difference of persons ceases to have any reality. He seems also to speak of the Word as created or produced.‖ Elsewhere he says that the three persons of the Godhead are three names; but he has himself explained this rather vague expression by declaring that he regards these names as representing corresponding realities.¶ In his "Panegyric," which contains the most complete expression of his thought, we find him using terms which vindicate him from

* *Περὶ μὲν πατρὸς καὶ υἱοῦ εὐσεβῶς πρεσβεύει.* (Routh, iii. 430.) *Ἡ τῆς εἰκόνος τιμὴ καὶ ἀτιμία, τοῦ πρωτοτύπου ἐστὶ τιμὴ ἢ πάλιν ἀτιμιά.* (Ibid.)

† *Ὑποβεβηκέναι αὐτο (πνεῦμα) τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ υἱοῦ ἀποφάσκει δόξης.* (Ibid.)

‡ The "Panegyric" is in vol. iv. of Huet's "Origen." That which remains of his writings has been collected in the "Bibliotheca Patrum" of Galland, vol. iii. p. 379. See also in Maï, "Spicilegium Rom.," vol. iii. p. 696, a fragment of a sermon by Gregory Thaumaturgus, "De Trinitate."

§ *Πατέρα καὶ υἱὸν ἐπινοίᾳ μὲν εἶναι δύο, ὑποστάσει δὲ ἕν.* (Basile, "Ep.," 210, 5.)

‖ *Ποίημα, κτίσμα.* (Ibid., 210.)

¶ "Nomina sunt personæ; personæ significant id quod est et subsistit." (Maï, "Spicileg. Rom.," iii. 696.)

any approach to Sabellianism. The Word is in his view the Lord of our souls, the firstborn of the Father, who has created and who governs the universe. He is the truth, wisdom, and power of the universal Father, one with Him, or rather He is in Him; so that all homage to the Son is really paid to the Father, for He is the channel of the Father's favours and the highway of piety.* We find the same doctrine in the confession ascribed to him, which has probably been somewhat remodelled in the disputes of Arianism.† The Son is the impress and image of the Deity, the active power of universal creation. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit bears the trace of an interpolation of much later date, for it is brought into conformity with the strict orthodoxy of Nicæa. It is certain that Gregory Thaumaturgus admitted the distinction of the Divine persons, and that he only appeared to deny it by his too emphatic assertion of their substantial oneness. He had more piety than originality, and was altogether free from the thraldom of rigid formulæ, which belongs to a later date.

Theognostus, who was one of the catechists of Alexandria, gives us a striking instance of this looseness of expression.‡ He also speaks of the Word as a creature,§ and yet he affirms that He neither came forth from nothing nor from any created source, but from the very bosom of God.‖ He is the stream flowing from the fountain, the ray issuing from the

* "Oratio Panegyrica," c 4. (Huet, iv. 59.)
† Basile, "Ep.," 210. ‡ Routh, "Reliq.," 407.
§ *Υἱὸν δὲ λέγων κτίσμα.* ("Phot. Cod.," 106.)
‖ *Ἐκ τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς οὐσίας ἔφυ.* (Athanasius, "Ep. de Decret. Nicæn. Syn.," sec. 25; Routh, iii. 41.)

sun. His divinity is derived, but is nevertheless complete. Theognostus has one utterance of genius which goes far beyond the views of his own school. "The Father," he says, "must ever have a Son."* This is an acknowledgment that the Word is, in a manner, the complement of the Deity in a spiritual sense, and that the God who is love must needs have an eternal object to love. With one stroke of its wings, Christian thought is carried far above the abstract notion of the absolute, which never gives a solid basis to the divinity of the Word. In other passages Theognostus reverts to the erroneous tenets of his school, regarding the Word only in His relation to creation. "When God formed the design of constructing the universe," he says, "it was His will that His Son should precede it as the rule and pattern of the world."† We are thus brought back to the Platonist theory of the ideal.

§ II. *Dionysius of Alexandria.*

The most illustrious representative of Origen is Dionysius, the great bishop of Alexandria (248).‡ Possessing a mind singularly broad and liberal, he never shrank from the boldest flight of thought or form of expression. He did not indeed court opposi-

* Δεῖν φησὶ τὸν πατέρα ἔχειν υἱόν. ("Phot. Cod.," 106.)

† Οἷον τινα κανόνα τῆς δημιουργίας. (Greg. Nyssen., "Contra Eunom.," iii. 132; Routh, iv. 412.)

‡ The fragments of the works of Dionysius of Alexandria, scattered throughout the writings of Athanasius and Basil, have been collected in Galland's "Bibliotheca Patrum" (iii. 495). See also Routh ("Reliq.," iii. 220); and for Dionysius's letters, see "H. E.," Eusebius, book vii.

tion for its own sake, for never was man more averse to idle disputations; but his courageous loyalty to truth made him anxious to give to the idea the most forcible expression possible. Unhappily we have only a few letters and fragments remaining from all his vast exegetical and dogmatic labours. The saying of his to which the strongest objection has been taken, occurs in the letter addressed by him to Ammon and Euphranor. In substance it is a challenge to Sabellianism. "The Son of God," he says, "is a creature born of God; He resembles Him in nature, but in His essence He differs from the Father. In truth, the husbandman cannot be confounded with the vine, nor the builder of boats with his vessel. The Son, inasmuch as He is a creature, did not exist before His creation."* Dionysius' intention was to define as clearly as possible the distinction of the Divine persons in opposition to the school which regarded the Son as a mere manifestation, only a ray of the eternal light. But his words do, in fact, make a grave attack upon the divinity of the Word. In another passage of the same writing he defined the Divine life as being essentially uncreated. "God is the Being who was never produced; His is the uncreated essence; nature then must have been created."† The significance of this declaration cannot be explained away; it formed too close a parallel to that which ascribed a beginning to the Son. In order to judge fairly of the theology

* Ποίημα καὶ γενετὸν εἶναι τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, μήτε δὲ φύσει ἴδιον, ἀλλὰ κέινον κατ' οὐσίαν εἶναι τοῦ πατρὸς, ὥσπερ ἔστιν ὁ γεωργὸς πρὸς τὴν ἄμπελον ξαι ὁ ναυπηγὸς πρὸς τὸ σκάφος. Καὶ γὰρ ὡς ποίημα ὢν οὐκ ἦν πρὶν γένηται. (Athanasius, "De Sententia Dionysii," c. 4.)

† Ἀγένητόν ἐστιν ὁ θεὸς καὶ οὐσία αὐτοῦ ἡ ἀγεννησία. (Eusebius, "Præpar. evang.," 7, 19.)

of Dionysius, we must not forget that in the same writing he expressed the relations of the Father and the Son by using the old figures of the stream flowing from the source, the ray issuing from the central light, the plant springing from the root. He was not a Unitarian after the manner of Arius, any more than he was a Trinitarian of the school of Athanasius. He regarded the distinctions which issued in the triplicity of the persons, as produced in God Himself; but these distinctions were far more strongly marked in his view than they appeared to the orthodoxy of Nicæa. In any case, his language was lacking in logical exactness, and contained actual contradictions.

The assertions of the bishop of Alexandria provoked a veritable scandal among the bishops of Libya. They addressed a letter of complaint to Dionysius, bishop of Rome, as the representative of one of the most important Churches in the world. The Roman bishop entered his protest against the ideas, and still more against the expressions, of his colleague of Alexandria, dwelling especially on the unfortunate words which seemed to represent Christ as a creature, and to establish a difference between Him and the Father. Dionysius of Alexandria was a great friend of peace. He endeavoured, in an apologetic letter addressed to the bishop of Rome, to explain, not without modifying, the declarations to which the strongest objection was taken.* It would appear at first sight as if he accepted entirely the ideas of his opponent. He does, in fact, insist emphatically on the impossibility of separating the reflection from the ray, and the Son from the

* See Routh, "Reliq.," iii. 390 and following.

Father, since the fatherhood of God must be contingent on His possession of the Son. The eternal light must then have always had its reflection, and the eternal fatherhood implies the equal eternity of the Son.* To speak of the Son as produced by the Father is simply to use the current language of the Greeks, who are wont to say that the word is produced by him who utters it. Is not this the true etymology of the word *poet?* The poet is he who produces, and that which is produced is the manifestation of his thought.† On closer examination, however, it is clear that Dionysius of Alexandria still maintained in its strict sense the subordination of the Son to the Father. He compares their relation to that of word to thought. Thought is, as it were, the inward, implicit word; as it passes the lips it becomes outward, articulate language; it is the same in essence, but it has changed its mode. This is again the old distinction between the inward and the outward Word. Only with Dionysius the inward Word is not simply the second person of the Trinity in His virtual existence, as with Justin and Athenagoras; He is already God.‡ It is nevertheless certain that before his controversy with the bishop of Rome, Dionysius did not admit thus distinctly the eternity of the outward Word, and that he spoke of Him as having a beginning. He subsequently reconsidered this, his first opinion, and he ought to have said so more clearly. In endeavouring to justify all his assertions, he involves his real views in obscurity. In

* Ὄυτος ἀεὶ τοῦ φωτὸς, δῆλον ὠδ ἔστιν ἀεὶ τὸ ἀπαύγασμα. (Routh, iii. 390.—Reproduction of the quotations of Athanasius.)

† Ibid., 395.

‡ Ibid., iii. 396, 399.

affirming that the Son is eternally begotten of the Father, he means that He is eternally produced by Him. Dionysius summed up his doctrine in this formula: "We expand the indivisible Monas into the Trias, and we bring back the Trias undiminished to the Monas."* This singular formula sets aside absolutely the idea that the Son is of a different nature from the Father. Dionysius did not hesitate to declare the identity of their essence. He made use here again of figurative language. The fountain, in becoming a stream, changes its name, but not its nature; so is it likewise with the root which becomes a plant. The spring is the Father, the stream is the Son. Life issues from life, as the stream from its source; the shining light is the radiation of that which is inextinguishable.† All these images savour rather of emanation than of generation by an act of the will. Evidently the thought of Dionysius is involved; he cannot give up the subordination, which is, in his view, the sole guarantee of the distinction of the Divine Persons. But on the other hand, the rigid orthodoxy which has been developed by opposition to Sabellianism lays its demands upon him. He acknowledges the claim, but fails to reconcile it with his previous bias. Hence ensues a painful conflict which he cannot decide, and which involves him in flagrant contradictions. These contradictions themselves, however, in so generous a mind, are worthy of note as a sign of the times. There is no position more painful for the

* Εἰς τὴν τριάδα τὴν μονάδα πλατύνομεν ἀδιαίρετον, καὶ τὴν τριάδα πάλιν ἀμείωτον εἰς τὴν μονάδα συγκεφαλαιούμεθα. (Routh, iii. 395.)

† Ζωὴ ἐκ ζωῆς ἐγεννήθη καὶ ὥσπερ ποταμὸς ἀπὸ πηγῆς. (Ibid., 398.)

religious thinker than to find himself on the boundary between two distinct doctrinal periods, between old convictions and new necessities.

The fragments of other doctrinal writings of Dionysius, which have come down to us, present little interest in a theological point of view. His "Treatise upon Nature" is a clear and sound refutation of the atheism of the Epicureans; he regards egoism as the source of our spiritual errors.* His "Commentary on Job" has come down to us in a very incomplete form. He speaks in exalted terms of the power, the wisdom, and especially of the eternity of God, which appears all the more to be admired, as placed in contrast with our changing and transitory life, in which the present slips away from us, and the future, which as yet is not, is hurrying on to the cessation of being.† But words like these add nothing to the doctrinal teaching of Dionysius. It is clear, from his canonical letter to Basilides, which treats of the celebration of the paschal fast, that he remains entirely faithful to the spirituality of Origen, and that in worship, as in morals, he attaches importance, not to the petty form, but to the true essence, and is therefore very lenient to diversities of practice.‡ In the writing directed by him against Nepos, he energetically and in the very spirit of Origen reprobates the gross and Jewish conceptions of the future of the Church cherished by the millenarians.§ This led him to give his whole thought to the book of the Revelation, from

* Τυφλώττει τις ἐπὶ πολὺ περὶ τὰ αὐτῷ προσήκοντα διά φιλαυτιάν. (Routh, iv. 419.)

† Ibid., 453.

‡ The letter to Basilides is given in Routh's "Reliq.," iii. 223.

§ The whole of this discussion is found in Eusebius. ("H. E.," vii. 25.)

which was the great argument of the millenarians. Even when we fail to agree in his conclusions, we cannot but admire the principles of sacred criticism which he enunciates. This is unquestionably the most novel and original portion of his theology. He successfully created the delicate instrument of criticism, avoiding all exaggeration, and carefully balancing the various elements of a just appreciation. If he makes large use of internal evidence, he carefully guards against any arbitrary assumption that his interpretation of revelation must be absolutely the right. This appears from the following words, in which he addresses those who rejected the book of the Revelation as a whole, because it clashed with their preconceived notions. "I should not venture," he says, "to reject altogether this book, which I see to be held in such high esteem by many of my brethren. I admit that it may have a meaning which passes my conception, and which is the hidden and profound sense of the things therein contained. Though I may fail to understand, it is possible that the words may conceal an idea more sublime than any which I can discern. I do not make my understanding the arbiter and measure of such a book,* but trusting the more to faith, I am ready to believe that it contains more glorious thoughts than those which I am capable of perceiving. I do not condemn that which I fail to grasp; I rather admire that which is beyond me."† With this important reservation, Dionysius assigns to criticism its true office. He cannot reject the Revela-

* Οὐκ ἰδιῷ ταῦτα μετρῶν καὶ κρίνων λογισμῷ. (Eusebius, "H. E.," vii. 25).

† Ibid.

tion because of the sublime character which he discerns in it; and he rightly finds a confirmation of this direct intuition of the divine in the general feeling of the Church. But he is careful not to apply this purely mystical proof to the scientific aspect of the question, which rightly claims an attentive examination. This examination he carries on with profound research, and his conclusion is that the Revelation is not by the Apostle John. He arrives at this result by a comparison of the undoubted writings of the apostle with the book of Revelation. This is a mark of genius, for he thus gains a solid basis for his critical estimate, and marks out the surest line of criticism. His comparison is first directed to the style. He observes that the Greek of the gospel and epistles is far more correct than that of the Revelation, which is overlaid with Hebraisms. He then compares the development of the thoughts, and shows that there is a striking analogy between the gospel and the epistles, the tendency of both being to establish the incarnation of the Word in opposition to docetism. The method of exposition is the same in these writings, while in the book of Revelation it is altogether different. In the third place, Dionysius carries the comparison into the domain of psychology. Neither in his gospel nor in his epistles does John name himself, while the writer of the Revelation lays great stress upon his personality. Lastly, it is strange that John makes no allusion in his letters to the revelations with which he had been honoured, if he was indeed the writer of the Apocalypse, while Paul frequently alludes to those which he had received. Dionysius does not ignore the external

evidence, properly speaking, or treat with contempt the tradition which ascribes the authorship of the last book of Scripture to John. He endeavours to harmonise this tradition with the results of his examination, by ascribing the Apocalypse to John the Presbyter. The Church has perfect liberty assuredly to question and to reject this result of his researches, as indeed we ourselves do.* Nevertheless, his method cannot be too much admired; he was the initiator of sacred criticism, uniting respect for holy things with freedom of inquiry. Clement shows himself in this respect superior to Origen, who, as we have seen, leant towards the theory of a divinely given canon, the infallible result of which is to make Providence responsible for the errors and fallacies of the human mind. The example of the great Alexandrine is conclusive in this respect, for he introduced into the sacred canon the "Book of Susannah" and other apocryphal writings.

§ III. *Julius Africanus, Methodius, Pamphylus the Martyr.*

Dionysius of Alexandria had been preceded in the path of exegesis by Julius Africanus, who elicited Origen's letter about the "Book of Susannah." It is through the refutation given him by his powerful opponent that we are made acquainted with the fineness of his critical sense. The reasons for which he rejects the apocryphal writing, which Origen was so anxious to retain, are very remarkable. They exhibit an admirable balancing of internal and external evidence. Julius Africanus appeals first to the

* See "Martyrs and Apologists," by the author.

historical evidence, to the Jewish canon from which the "Book of Susannah" was excluded. He demands more from history than a mere testimony; he goes back to the period and the circumstances to which tradition assigned the facts narrated; he shows that the state of the Jews during the period of the captivity rendered impossible the wealth which is ascribed in the story to the family of Susannah. He then passes on to the study of the text itself, and points out that it contains plays upon words which indicate a Greek original. He calls in question the representation given of Daniel, and shows that he was not capable of passing the judgment which is attributed to him, and which is worthy rather of a stage player than of a great prophet. Lastly, rising to still higher considerations, he compares the mode of revelation in the apocryphal writing with that of authentic prophecy, and he concludes from all these considerations that the Church cannot accept as a divine oracle that which is simply an absurd fable.* Criticism—that inseparable companion of theology, whose province is to divide the wheat from the chaff in the granary of God—thus began its work in the third century. Its earliest efforts were characterised by that steadfast piety and holy liberty, which enable the devout student to discern the divine element and to free it from alien admixtures. The period of spiritual fervour and independence which preceded the Council of Nicæa, was admirably adapted to the development of a science so necessary to the Church, but it was unhappily abruptly cut short after the fourth century.

* See Origen's letter to Julius Africanus, in which he goes over the whole argument of his opponent. ("Origenis opera," i. 7.)

Everything denotes the commencement of a new era. The further we advance in the third century, the more keen and vigilant do we find the susceptibility on points of doctrine. But even those who are most conscious of this tendency are not free from the indecision of their age.

Methodius, bishop of Patara, in Syria, who died in 311, vainly endeavoured to approve himself to the orthodoxy of the succeeding age by assailing the writings of Origen. He nevertheless maintained the subordination of the Word.* "God," he says, "willed that He who existed before all ages in the heavens should be thus produced for the world; that is to say, that what was before unknown should be revealed.† God alone is without beginning." The Word is above time,‡ and all things were made by Him; He is, as it were, the hand of God, which, after having created matter, imparted to it form, order, harmony.§ He has, then, a full participation in the divinity; but He is, nevertheless, in the second rank. He united Himself to human flesh, as the bridegroom of the Canticles to the virgin, who was affianced to Him.‖ Methodius emphatically repudiated the eternity of the Word as taught by Origen, the pre-existence of souls, and the idea of a temporary humanity, which could have no positive

* Numerous fragments of the writings of Methodius are found in Photius ("Codex," 234-236; Epiphanius, "Hæres," 64). They have been collected by Galland ("Bibliotheca Patrum, iii. 663).

† Τὸν προόντα ἤδη πρὸ τῶν αἰωνῶν ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς ἐβουλήθεν καὶ τῷ κοσμῳ γεννῆσαι, ὃ δή ἐστι πρόσθεν ἀγνοούμενον γνωρίσαι. ("Phot. Cod.," 236, 311, Bekker edition.)

‡ Ἀορίστως, ἀχρόνως. (Ibid.) The abode of the Father, ἄναρχος. (Ibid., 235, 304.)

§ Ὁ υἱὸς ἡ παντοδύναμος καὶ κραταιὰ χεὶρ τοῦ πατρός. (Ibid., 236, 304.)

‖ Ibid., 236, 311.

value, and would be only one stage in the process of development, the body being represented simply as a soiled garment, to be cast off as quickly as possible. He insisted strongly also upon the resurrection of the body.* The covering of skins, in which Adam was clothed after the Fall, does not set forth his physical nature, but that same nature in a state of deterioration, and requiring to be purified by death. "Man is not a soul without a body, nor a body without a soul."† It is strange that Methodius, possessing so much true wisdom, should regard asceticism as the highest ideal of holiness. He draws a clear distinction between the morality of the perfect and that of ordinary life. These thoughts are very fully expressed in his "Dialogue of the Virgins," a diffuse composition possessing no philosophical value. The fragments preserved in his "Treatise on Free Will," show that he was a true apostle of Christian spirituality. He carefully distinguishes between the trial of liberty and sin. The primordial law gave occasion for the manifestation of the free will. Methodius fell into error, not in discussing the very questionable views advanced by Origen, but in bringing against them the charge of heresy: this was to substitute condemnation for free controversy.

The great apologist found a zealous, and even passionate defender in Pamphylus, who deserved the appellation of the Martyr. He devoted himself with pious zeal to making a collection in the library of

* "Phot. Cod.," 234, 235.

† Ἄνθρωπος οὔτε ψυχὴ χωρὶς σώματος, οὔτε σῶμα χωρὶς ψυχῆς. (Ibid., 294.)

Cæsarea of the works of the master, and in particular of the "Hexaples," and was aided in his task by his companion, the bishop Eusebius. Cast into prison during the persecution under Maximus, he spent his last days in writing an apology of Origen's teaching, of which only a few pages have come down to us.* He endeavours to justify the views of Origen as to the relation of the Son to the Father. He shows, by numerous quotations, that he in no way impugns the divinity of the Redeemer, and that he gives no place either to the theory of emanation or to docetism. He then touches on Origen's doctrine of the pre-existence of souls, and since he cannot deny that this is a divergence from current opinion, he invokes, on its behalf, the legitimate rights of Christian thought, which has never felt itself constrained to unanimity on such obscure points. "It is notorious," he says, "that there are great diversities among the adherents of the Church on this doctrine of souls, and that some hold one opinion and some another. Why, then, should Origen be incriminated more than others for his peculiar views?"† Simple diversities of opinion are not to be branded as heresies when they do not overstep the limits of the faith of the Church. Evidently Pamphylus belongs to the old school; he is one of the last survivors of the great era of spiritual catholicity. He is none the less a saint and a confessor. His love for liberty is united with absolute devotion to

* This apology is found in vol. v. of Huet's "Origen," and in Routh. ("Reliq.," iv. 339.)

† "Num vero cum diversitas sit apud omnes ecclesiasticos, et alii alia de anima sentiant, et omnes diversa; quomodo hic magis quam cæteri incusandus est?" ("Apol.," c. 9; Routh iv. 380.)

Jesus Christ. He is worthy to represent that glorious period of Christian liberality and heroism, as it is just vanishing from the horizon of the Church. He bore his testimony in the dungeon at Cæsarea, which witnessed the cruel sufferings of Origen. He was put to death only a few years before the inauguration of Christianity as the official and imperial religion. We deem him happier dying thus, a free martyr in a free age, than had he lived to see the day of infamous state patronage and fatal spiritual thraldom.

CHAPTER VI.

THE GRECO-ROMAN SCHOOL.

The Roman West, like the East, had its theologians; it was not content to subject itself to the influence of the great speculative movement inaugurated at Alexandria. It was not however from the metropolis of the West that the impulse came, and the initiative was taken in the domain of religious science. The Church of Rome devoted its energies to its own growth and organisation, and to the exercise of that strong yet supple genius of governing, which was soon to secure to it the primacy? Western theology, apart from proconsular Africa, has only two great names to mention. Irenæus and Hippolytus are both sons of the Greco-Oriental Church, the language of which they speak. They reproduce its principal features, though in forms modified by the influence of different surrounding circumstances, and also by the peculiar genius of each. They both took part in questions of government and ecclesiastical polity, but their attitude was widely different. While Irenæus urged on the development of external authority and the acceptance of tradition, Hippolytus, who laboured half a century later, was one of the boldest champions of the freedom of the Church, and adhered with such fidelity to the spirit of the Alexandrine school, that one of his writings has been ascribed to Origen himself.

§ I. *The Theology of Irenæus.*

Irenæus was a theologian both by necessity and duty. Constrained to take up the defence of Christian beliefs against Gnosticism, he was under the necessity of presenting them in the form of a creed, in order to vindicate their true meaning in opposition to what he judged to be the misconstructions of his skilful adversaries. This apologetic and polemical design gives to his exposition a very striking character of simplicity and clearness, and prevents its lingering in pure speculation. He seizes the thought with a firm grasp, and defines it with clearness and force. He is a Latin as to method, but the substance of his thought is truly Greek. It is the ripened fruit of that long and free development which is manifested throughout the whole course of the second century, in Greece, in Asia Minor, and at Alexandria, and which finds its chief focus at Ephesus in the time of St. John. He remained faithful to that fruitful doctrine of the Word which combines in such deep and living harmony the human element and the divine. Only upon Gallo-Roman soil, the theologian has less faith in freedom, and believes in the necessity of giving protection to the truth. He does not yet seek that protection in the formularies imposed by great councils; he is satisfied with the episcopal power as the guardian of tradition. But even this is a deviation from the true idea, and the dominant inspiration of the teaching becomes less free. The stream, enclosed between higher and closer banks, loses somewhat of its first brightness and force. On the other hand, the theology of Irenæus, which is directed entirely against the metaphysics of

Gnosticism, establishes itself strongly upon the *terra firma* of spiritual truth; it is not satisfied with mere words; it rejects all that approaches to idle and subtle symbolism, and deals only with great realities. Hence all that relates to the person and work of Jesus Christ is treated in this theology with incontestable superiority. We have already seen from the plan of Irenæus' book against the heretics, with what logical power he refutes Gnosticism, pursuing it under all its disguises, tearing away the artificial veil of its Scripture symbols, confuting it by text after text restored to its true meaning, and enforcing in opposition to it those great principles of conscience, so insolently trampled upon by fatalistic speculation, which treats of evil as a divine necessity. Let us now consider his theological system, properly so called.

His theodicy is far more free from Platonist abstractions than that of the Christian schools of the East. Irenæus does not insist, like Justin and Athenagoras, upon the incomprehensibility of God. No one has raised a higher barrier between the finite and the infinite, between the creature and the Creator. "God," he says, "creates; man is produced."* He deprecates all profane comparisons between the two. He boldly avows that human language can never convey the idea of the divine perfections, since it must divide and analyse where, in reality, there is only a living unity. The several attributes of God are distinguished only by a necessity of our minds; in truth, they all blend in one bright ray of purity, holiness,

* "Deus quidem facit, homo autem fit." ("Hæres., iv. 24.) ("Feuardentius" edition. Paris, 1639.)

glory, intellect, and love. "If the gnostics," he says, "knew the Scriptures, and had allowed themselves to be instructed in the truth, they would have acknowledged that God is not as men, and that His thoughts are different from theirs. The universal Father is indeed far above all human affections and passions. He is a simple, not a compound being, ever equal and unchangeable. He is all feeling, all spirit, all thought, all reason, all hearing, all ear, all light, and the sole source of all good. He is far above all attributes, and hence He is ineffable." * In spite of this infinite distance between us and God, He is not to us that silent abyss of the Gnostics, which precedes all life, eludes all perception, and is but another name for the great void.† God is essentially spirit, wisdom, justice, love.‡ If He is invisible to the eye of the creature, He is perceived by love, which is an emanation from His being, and constitutes the spiritual life of beings made in His likeness.§

We thus escape that transcendentalism which reduces the Divinity to a mere creation of the mind. Irenæus shook off the yoke of abstract metaphysics, which weighed down the Platonist Fathers, and which exercised so fatal an influence upon the doctrine of the Word. His God is a living God, and not a mere idea or philosophical conception; holiness and love form part of His essence. Love is even the very substance of His being, as appears from the passage in which the pardon of Adam is based upon the unconquerable

* "Hæres.," ii. 16.
† "Vacuum esse eum confitebantur." (Ibid., ii. 17.)
‡ Ibid., iii. 43.
§ "Per charitatem proximum fieri Deo." (Ibid., ii. 45.)

magnanimity of God.* Thus, for God not to pardon, not to love, would be for Him to be overcome and suffer loss. This is equivalent to the definition of St. John, "*God is love.*"

Irenæus is very moderate in his divine ontology; he will not even attempt to lift the veil which conceals the essence of God from our feeble mind. Hence his extreme reserve in touching on those higher metaphysics in which Gnosticism so delighted. He believes in the Trinity, distinguishing clearly between the Father, from whom all proceeds, the Word, who has received all from the Father, and the Holy Spirit, who was before the world.† Irenæus does not attempt to offer a metaphysical construction of this great mystery. Some difficulty is found in distinguishing clearly the Word from the Holy Spirit, at least in relation to His offices and attributes. "God," says Irenæus, "is all Spirit and all Word. That which He thinks, He says, and that which He says, He thinks."‡ Thus the Wisdom and the Word are eternal as Himself, and form part of His essence. We are thus led far away from the theology of the early Greek Fathers, who only allowed the outward and hypostatic production of the Word to be coincident with creation. According to Irenæus, to assert that the word comes after the thought, is to fall into anthropomorphism, to descend from the

* "Sed quoniam Deus invictus et magnanimus est, magnanimum quidem se exhibuit ad correctionem hominis." (Hæres.," iii. 33.)

† "Adest ei (Patri) semper Verbum et Sapientia, Filius, et Spiritus." (Ibid., iv. 37.)

‡ "Deus autem totus existens mens et totus existens Logos, quod cogitat, hoc et loquitur; et quod loquitur, hoc et cogitat. Cogitatio enim ejus Logos, et Logos mens, et omnia concludens mens, ipse est Pater." (Ibid., ii. 48.)

region of the eternal to that of temporary succession. "As God is all spirit, all reason, all operating mind, all light, ever identical and equal with Himself, we may not think of Him as in any sense divided. The language of men being carnal, has no correspondence with the rapidity of His thought, which is spiritual. Thus our word is, as it were, choked within us; it cannot give expression all at once to our complete thought, but finds separate and successive utterance, according to the possibilities of our language."* The divine Word is the full revelation of the Father. He is His spoken, manifested, eternal reason. The Word is inseparable from the attributes to which the Gnostics had given distinct form as the divine Æons; He is at once the truth and the life.† The distinction of persons seems hard to reconcile with this absolute denial of any subordination. Irenæus was on the verge of Sabellianism; he was only saved by his firm determination not to depart from tradition, and to avoid all dangerous speculation. He refuses to offer any explanation of the mode of the generation of the Son; this is a transcendental problem with which our intellect cannot deal. "If it is asked in what manner did the Son proceed from the Father, we reply that this procreation, this generation, this production, this manifestation, or call it what you will, this unutterable generation is known to none, not to Valentinus, Marcion, Saturninus, or Basilides; not to angels, archangels, principalities, or powers. It is known to the Father alone, who brought forth the Son, and to the Son who is born of Him. His generation cannot be told."‡

* "Hæres.," ii. 47. † Ibid., ii. 14.

‡ "Inenarrabilis generatio ejus." (Ibid., ii. 48.)

The generation of the Son, however, though so deep a mystery, is nevertheless a reality, as clearly beyond all dispute as beyond all thought. It has no beginning. God, in His mysterious and holy union with the Word, is perfectly self-sufficing. Creation is an act of love; it has no other cause than the free mercy of the Father. God did not make Adam in the beginning because He had need of man, but that He might have a being upon whom to bestow His benefits.* Before the creation of Adam —before, indeed, any creature was called into being — the Son, who dwelt in the bosom of the Father, glorified Him, and was glorified by the Father. The world was created by the Word out of nothing, and was not simply formed by the organisation of chaotic matter.†

The moral creature was made in the image of God; the Divine breath, animating the physical organism, produced the reasonable being who is called man. The greatness of his nature is fully manifested in the second Adam. The union of the Word and the Holy Spirit with humanity brings to the latter all the perfections which it was divinely destined to possess.‡ Man only attains to the true consummation of his being when he receives the fulness of the Godhead.

* Non quasi indigens Deus hominis plasmavit Adam." ("Hæres.," iv. 28.)

† "Omnia quæ facta sunt infatigabili Verbo fecit." (Ibid., ii. 2; Ibid., ii. 11.)

‡ "Quemadmodum ab initio plasmationis nostræ in Adam, ea quæ fuit a Deo inspiratio vitæ, unita plasmati animavit hominem, et animal rationabile ostendit: sic in fine Verbum patris et Spiritus Dei, adunitus antiquæ substantiæ plasmationis Adæ, viventem et *perfectum effecit hominem.*" (Ibid., v. 1.)

We shall meet with this grand thought again, as the very centre of the doctrine of redemption. Humanity, even if it had not sinned, would only have reached its full realisation in becoming united with the Deity in as real a manner as by the incarnation.

Adam was created free, that is to say, he was intended to fulfil his destiny by means of the determination of his own will. Trial, not the Fall, was needed to raise him to this high position. We were made men that we might become gods.* God will not use coercion; His designs are only love. He puts good in all; but on man as on the angels He confers the power of choice.† Good, which is the gift of the Creator, is to be freely preserved; it is only under this condition that it acquires a moral character. The fall and the punishment of the evil angels can be laid to their own charge alone. They did not choose to hold fast the good which was their appanage, and their rebellion was their ruin. The kingdom of evil and of perdition was not founded, as the Gnostics assert, by a Divine decree, or by a predestination of woe. The fall of man is the consequence of the unbelief and disobedience of Eve, who listened to the suggestions of the serpent.‡ The first consequence of sin was the loss of immortality; the fallen being is devoted to death, and transmits the germ of death to his descendants.§ Suffering and toilsome labour are both fruits

* "Nos enim imputamus et quoniam non ab initio Dii facti sumus, sed primo quidem homines, tunc demum Dii." ("Hæres.," iv. 73.)

† "Bonum dat omnibus. Posuit autem in homine potestatem electionis, quemadmodum in angelis." (Ibid., iv. 71.)

‡ Ibid., iii. 33.

§ "Quemadmodum per priorem generationem mortem hæreditavimus." (Ibid., v. i.)

of the first transgression. The punishment comes by the direct will of God, who is as faithful to His threatenings as to His promises. It is He who pronounced the sentence of condemnation; nevertheless, the curse rests rather upon the earth, which was the scene of human rebellion, than upon Adam.*

Again, no one is condemned except for his own faults. The race of Adam follows its father in the path of death because it has followed him in that of rebellion. Evil and good alike become effectual only as they receive the seal and confirmation of the will.†

The Fall has destroyed in man the glorious work of creation, by despoiling him of the divine and immortal life, which was his glory and his true nature. God will not be overcome; He will not allow His original plan to fail. Hence He resolves to save fallen man. By this salvation He simply restores man to his normal condition, or rather He fulfils that which would have been man's glorious destiny had he not fallen. Such a restoration fallen man could never have achieved for himself, for he is the slave of evil and the victim of death. It was not possible to create anew this man who had been vanquished and spoiled, and thus to render him victorious, nor could he who was still under the dominion of sin be made to receive salvation.‡ On the other hand, this salvation could not be wrought outside the pale of humankind. "Death came by a

* "Non ipsum maledixit Adam, sed terram in operibus ejus." ("Hæres.," iii. 35.)

† He says of the heretics that they retain the old leaven of their birth: "In veteri generationis perseverantes fermento." (Ibid., v. 1.) Present disobedience then is a confirmation of the first disobedience, of which we have the germ within us by birth.

‡ Ibid, iii. 20.

man; the resurrection must come in like manner."* The incarnation alone solves this otherwise insoluble problem.

Here appears the superiority of the theology of Irenæus, who indeed on this point has never been surpassed. All who went before him had made the incarnation nothing more than a superior mode of revelation, or Divine illumination, because they regarded religion too much in the light of an intellectual problem. Irenæus does not ignore this view, which has a measure of importance. He also admits that the Word assumed human flesh in order to give us the manifestation of God, and to enlighten the darkness of our ignorance. God alone could reveal God to us. The knowledge of the Father is based upon the Word.† A knowledge of God in His glory would utterly overwhelm us; we can know Him only by His love, which shines with brightest, mildest ray, in His Son.‡ The Lamb alone opens the seals of the book which contains the secret of the Father. "Just as, in order to see the light, we must be in the light; so, in order to see God, we must be in God."§ He who was incomprehensible has made Himself visible, and come down to the comprehension of men.‖ It is in this sense that Irenæus says that the Father is the Son invisible, and the Son is the Father visible.¶

* Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ δι' ἀνθρώπου ὁ θανάτος, δι' ἀνθρώπου ἀνάστασις ἐκ νεκρῶν. ("Hæres.," iii. 20.)

† Ibid., iv. 15.

‡ "Igitur secundum magnitudinem non est cognoscere Deum: impossibile est enim mensurari Patrem: secundum autem dilectionem ejus. Hæc est enim quæ nos per Verbum ejus ducit ad Patrem." (Ibid., iii. 37.)

§ Ὥσπερ οἱ βλέποντες τὸ φῶς, ἐντὸς εἰσὶ τοῦ φωτὸς, οὕτως οἱ βλέποντες τὸν θεὸν ἐντὸς γίνονται τοῦ θεοῦ. (Ibid., iv. 30, 31.)

‖ Ibid.

¶ "Invisibile Pater, visibile autem Patris Filius." (Ibid., iv. 14.)

This object of the incarnation is not, however, the most important. To know God is not all. He needs to be appropriated and possessed; and this implies, for a fallen race, a work of reparation and redemption. Wherein does this work consist? Irenæus makes the current use of Bible language. He speaks of a ransom, a propitiation. The meaning, however, which he attaches to these words, has no analogy with that subsequently given to them, when theology came to seek an equivalent for the infinitude of sin, in the infinite suffering endured by the God-man. Such a conception is altogether alien to his thought. If the victim of Calvary saves us, it is by virtue of His true and real humanity,—a fact which would not, in the view of Irenæus, compromise in any way His divinity, inasmuch as for him, the second Adam is in fact the true Adam, that is, the perfect man; for union with the Divine was the original destiny of the being created in the image of God. Born miraculously of the Virgin Mary, in order to escape the heritage of original sin, Jesus is indeed the Word Incarnate. He has veritably assumed our human flesh, with all its infirmities, but without its defilements. He was familiar with want and weariness; He wept over the grave of Lazarus; drops of bloody sweat stood on his brow; His side was pierced with the soldier's spear; and His soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.* He was, in

The reader may consult with advantage the learned thesis of M. Hackenschmidt on this subject, entitled "Sancti Irenæi De opere et beneficiis D. N. Jesu Christi Sententia." Strasbourg, 1869. We agree with this writer in his main idea. Like him, we fail to find in Irenæus either the idea of a fraud practised on the devil, or the theory of Anselm.

* "Hæres.," iii. 32.

very truth, all that He seemed to be.* The choice of Mary as the mother of the Saviour was determined not by a fictitious original purity, which places her apart from fallen humanity. No, it was her obedience to the call of God which won for her this high dignity, which Irenæus describes in somewhat exaggerated terms when he says, that by her faith she broke the fatal bond which Eve had formed by her disobedience.†

There is no suggestion of the immaculate conception of the mother of the Saviour. Her submission to the words of the angel Gabriel is her sole title to the honour devolved upon her. The distinction of the two natures in Jesus Christ finds no place in the doctrine of Irenæus. Undoubtedly the human element is not absolutely confounded with the divine, but there is nothing to mark an essential difference between the Word Incarnate and the first Adam. The first man was, in truth, destined to receive and to possess the Deity. The Word, in the man Jesus, occupies precisely the place which the Divine Spirit would have filled in primeval man had he remained true to his original destiny. It follows that Christ realises in the end of the ages the ideal which sin had destroyed in the beginning. He was the perfect man; that is to say, man perfectly united to God.‡ He recapitulates as it were in Himself the whole human race. He is

* "Hæres.," v. 1. † Ibid., iii. 33.

‡ "Necesse fuit Dominum suum plasma requirentem, illum ipsum hominem salvare qui factus fuerat secundum imaginem ejus. . . . Per secundum hominem vivificans eum hominem qui fuerat mortificatus." ("Hæres.," iii. 33.) "In fine Verbum Patris et spiritus Dei adunitus antiquæ substantiæ plasmationis Adæ viventem et perfectum fecit hominem." (Ibid., v. 1.)

the true head of mankind,* representing not only all generations, but all ages, for He redeemed childhood, youth, and mature age, by being Himself successively child, youth, and full-grown man.† This detracts nothing from His divinity, which was gloriously manifested in His miracles and still more in His pardons.‡ As a man He was full of compassion for our miseries, as God, He relieved them. Those who deny His divinity spoil His very humanity by robbing it of its brightest crown.§ In truth, the Word became man in order that man might put on the Word and be made by adoption the son of God. "The Word was made man," says Irenæus again, in words of singular boldness, "in order that He might accustom man to receive God, and God to dwell in man."‖ By Christ we finally become gods.¶

* "Filius Dei incarnatus longam hominum expositionem in seipso recapitulavit, nobis salutem præstans ut quod perdideramus in Adam, id est secundum imaginem et similitudinem esse Dei, hoc in Christo Jesu reciperemus." ("Hæres.," iii. 20.)

† "In omnem venit ætatem." (Ibid., ii. 39.) ‡ Ibid., v. 17.

§ Ἀποστεροῦντας τὸν ἄνθρωπον τῆς εἰς θεὸν ἀνόδου. (Ibid., iii. 21.)

‖ "Filius homo factus est, ut assuesceret hominem percipere Deum et assuesceret Deum habitare in homine." (Ibid., iii. 22.)

¶ "Primo quidem homines, tunc demum Dii." (Ibid., iv. 75.) I find only a single passage which seems to imply the duality of the two natures; it is this: Ὥσπερ γὰρ ἦν ἄνθρωπος, ἵνα πειρασθῇ, οὕτως καὶ λόγος ἵνα δοξασθῇ· ἡσυχάζοντος μὲν τοῦ λόγου ἐν τῷ πειράζεσθαι καὶ σταυροῦσθαι, καὶ ἀποθνήσκειν· συγγινομένου δὲ τῷ ἀνθρωπῷ ἐν τῷ νικᾶν, καὶ ὑπομένειν, καὶ χρηστεύεσθαι, καὶ ἀνίστασθαι καὶ ἀναλαμβάνεσθαι. (V. Int.) "Sicut enim homo erat ut tentaretur, sic et Verbum ut glorificaretur: requiescente quidem Verbo, ut posset tentari et inhonorari et crucifigi et mori; absorpto autem homine in eo quod vincit et sustinet et resurgit et assumitur." (iii. 21.) This passivity of the Word, in suffering and death, implies a kind of dualism. But as we have seen, this dualism is inherent in primeval man, inasmuch as he was destined to participate in the divine life. In fact, he is only truly man by virtue of this duality, which resolves itself into the unity of the moral person. This text cannot counter-

If we consider further not only the person but the work of the Redeemer, we shall understand still more clearly how important it was in the view of Irenæus to maintain in all its reality the human nature of Jesus Christ. The race of Adam is the slave of sin and Satan; it has brought itself under the yoke by its rebellion. Only by an act of obedience can it break its chains and triumph over its conqueror; and this redeeming act must be accomplished by man himself, or it can be of no moral value. "If," says Irenæus, "the enemy had not been overcome by a man, the victory would not have been a righteous one.* Hence the necessity of a real substitution, which should make the Word the representative of humanity." He was truly a man fighting for his own kinsmen. He fought and conquered; His obedience cancelled the rebellion of the creature, and brought salvation by destroying sin."† Thus redemption is the victory of the holy obedience of the head of the new humanity over the power of evil which held us enthralled.

In the days of His temptation Jesus encountered the adversary, and when He then drove him from Him, He cancelled the disobedience of Adam.‡ But the decisive triumph was on the cross, because there He vanquished death—"the last enemy." When Jesus made Himself a sacrifice, He concentrated on Himself all the effects of the hatred of the serpent to humanity; He then

vail all those we have quoted, which imply that human destiny finds its consummation in the Deity.

* μὴ ἄνθρωπος ἀνίκησεν τὸν ἀντίπαλον τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, οὐκ ἂν δικαίως ἐνικήθη ὁ ἐχθρός. ("Hæres.," iii. 20.)

† "Erat homo pro patribus certans, et per obedentiam inobedentiam persolvens." (Ibid., iii. 20.)

‡ Ibid., v. 21.

received that wound in the heel which had been predicted, but He nevertheless crushed the head of His adversary, because His death was the free sacrifice of obedient love.* The crucifixion is not then a sort of damnation endured by Christ in the room of the sinner. God does not need sacrifices to satisfy and appease His anger. It was not for His own sake, but for man's, that He instituted sacrifices at all.† His anger was not kindled against Adam, but against the serpent, the author of man's fall.‡ That which He requires is the rescinding of the rebellion ; it is obedience under the conditions which sin has entailed, that is to say, in suffering and death ; it is the victory of a holy humanity over the power of evil. It is on this ground we are reconciled to God by the death of His Son.§ Now all these conditions were fulfilled by the incarnation of the Word, by that merciful substitution of the Son of God for mankind, or rather by that assimilation freely established between His love and our misery, which was possible by virtue of the original relationship by which men rightfully belong to Him.‖ "In His infinite love He became what we are, in order to raise us to what He Himself is.¶ It is in this sense Christ has redeemed us by His own blood, and that He has given his soul for our soul, His flesh for our flesh.

* "Hæres.," iv. 78.

† "Ostendens quod ipse nullius rei indiget." (Ibid., iv. 32.)

‡ "Deus retorsit inimicitiam in ipsum inimicitiarum authorem auferens quidem suam, quæ erat adversus hominem inimicitiam, retorquens autem illam et mittens illam in serpentem." (Ibid., iv. 78.)

§ "Per passionem reconciliavit nos Deo." (Ibid., iv. 78.)

‖ "Sui proprii." (Ibid., v. 18.)

¶ "Factus est quod sumus, uti nos perficeret esse quod est ipse." (Ibid., v. "Præfatio.")

Since His glorious ascension He works powerfully upon the Church; He communicates to it His spirit; He guides and sustains it by His life. For us He suffered, for us He rose again."*

This work of free love ought to be accepted and ratified by the free act of the fallen creature under the influence of the Holy Spirit. "The Satanic rebellion established a claim upon us without right; we were by nature the sons of God Almighty, and it was in opposition to our true nature that we were estranged from Him. It was thus a righteous retribution when the Word of God, mighty in all things and standing steadfast and immovable in His righteousness, fought against apostasy in person, redeeming from its yoke those who had become bound under it. Unlike the evil power which has ruled over us from the beginning, laying hold with insatiable violence on that which does not belong to him, Christ uses no compulsion. No; He employs persuasion, as becomes a God, who would rather convince than coerce those whom He seeks to win, that He may maintain His righteousness, while yet He suffers not His work to perish.† The best commentary on this passage is given in the beautiful words of Vinet:

* Τῷ ἰδίῳ οὖν αἵματι λυτρωσαμένου ἡμᾶς τοῦ κυρίου, καὶ δόντος τὴν ψυχὴν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἡμετέρων ψυχῶν, καὶ τὴν σάρκα ἑαυτοῦ ἀντὶ τῶν ἡμετερῶν σαρκῶν. ("Hæres.," v. 1; iii. 18.)

† "Non cum vi, sed secundum suadelem." (Ibid., v. 1.) Baur ("Versœhnungslehre," p. 31) applies this expression not to man but to the devil, as if Irenæus had meant to say that God sought to persuade the devil himself of the righteousness of redemption. But this is to forget that he does not acknowledge any right of the devil over man ("injuste dominabatur nobis"), that there is therefore no need to convince him that all his pretensions are justly confounded as it were by the sufferings of Christ. It is in perfect harmony with the system of Irenæus to show respect for human freedom in the work of salvation.

"Grace is a divine eloquence which persuades the free will." "The love of Christ constrains us," as says St. Paul. The Divine Spirit reveals to us its grandeur and sweetness. Thus arises faith, which is in truth a divine persuasion, and by which the redeeming work wrought by the Divine freedom is perfected by the concurrence of the will of man. "Christ became the Head of the Church that He might draw all things to Himself."*

Irenæus was led to treat at considerable length the question of the relation of the two Testaments, which are so constantly represented by Gnosticism as radically opposed to each other. The bishop of Lyons threw much light on this point. He recognised at once the unity and the progression of the divine revelations. The Old Testament is connected with the New as the period of preparation with that of fulfilment. Irenæus did not fall into the error of some of his predecessors, who identified the two economies in almost every particular. As religion was for them pre-eminently a doctrine, they sought to discover identically the same teaching beneath the veils of Jewish symbolism and in the more transparent exposition of the Gospel. The position is altered, when, as with the bishop of Lyons, religion is regarded as essentially the fulfilment of a positive work of redemption. The idea or the symbol is always widely removed from the actual fact: in this light Christianity preserves its specific character. Thus Irenæus, after having affirmed the Divine origin of the old economy, and declared that both Testaments proceed from the same God and Father, that the seed of the Word is to be discovered throughout the whole of Holy Scripture,

* "Hæres.," iii. 18.

boldly asserts the superiority of the Gospel.* Revelation has many steps, which rise in succession from earth to heaven, and by which man is led up to God.† The first Covenant was designed to train man under the rod of the schoolmaster for the exercise of liberty. His will was brought into subjection in the earthly Jerusalem, and he was thus rendered fit for freedom.‡ The Mosaic institutions, in their peculiar and restrictive character, may be compared to the husk which encloses the still delicate grain till it is ready to cast off its sheath.§ No declaration could be more explicit of the abrogation of Judaism, while yet it was recognised in its necessary and transitionary character. The Gospel abolished the Old Testament by fulfilling it, that is to say, by fully realising the religious idea contained in it, in a more or less restricted form, and eliminating all that gave it a sort of local and therefore limited application.

The question was not simply of that tradition of the elders on which Jesus Christ set His ban, and which, like a tasteless beverage, diluted the generous wine of the Divine law.‖ That law itself was developed, enlarged, spiritualised, by the Master. It was not repealed, abrogated, but extended. The Lord did not destroy; He fulfilled all that was fundamental in the law, distinguishing thus between the moral and the ceremonial.¶ In the first place, Jesus Christ did away

* "Hæres.," iv. 21.

† "Non pauci gradus qui ducunt hominem ad Deum." (Ibid., iv. 22.)

‡ "Domitus habilis factus est ad libertatem." (Ibid., iv. 7.)

§ Ibid., iv. 7. ‖ "Aquatam traditionem." (Ibid., iv. 25.)

¶ Ibid., iv. 27.

with the few precepts which, like the law of divorce, were only concessions made to the hardness of the human heart.* He further abolished the rites, such as circumcision, which were mere figures. Irenæus does not hesitate to place the Sabbath in this category. "The Sabbath," he says, "taught that all our days ought to be consecrated to God. We have esteemed, says St. Paul, all days alike, as sheep for the slaughter; that is to say, as victims devoted to the altar of sacrifice, and we make our whole lives one continual offering without intermission."† The rite of circumcision and the Sabbath have so little absolute religious value, that the patriarchs were justified without any knowledge of them.‡ Thus the scope of the Decalogue itself, which contains the ordinance of the Sabbath, is ceremonial and transitory. That which abides is the moral essence based upon the nature of man, the universal element of the law, which does not belong to any peculiar institution. The new law presents this Divine and eternal essence of the old law exalted by Jesus Christ.§ This is the old and new commandment, of which love is the fulfilment.‖ Jesus Christ made the most important change in the motive to human obedience. Under Mosaism obedience was yielded under the pressure of fear, and with the terrors of the slave. The Gospel gives us the liberty of a pardoned child.¶ Has not the love of God made im-

* "Hæres.," iv. 29.

† "Consecrati et ministrantes omni tempore." (Ibid., iv. 30.)

‡ Ibid.

§ "Omnia hæc non dissolutionem præteritorum continent, sed plenitudinem et extensionem." (Ibid., iv. 27.) ‖ Ibid., iv. 25.

¶ "Jesus Christus nobis in novitate restituit libertatem." (Ibid., iv. 21.)

mortality again ours? We have now free access to the Father, and a holy boldness in claiming our part in the heritage of His children. Jesus Christ has made us indeed His freed men. Irenæus does not apply these great principles to the law alone, but to prophecy also. Prophecy partakes of the general character of Judaism; it thus prepared the way for that which superseded it. Particular prophecy was designed to accustom men to receive the Spirit of God.* God was seen by momentary glimpses, in order to herald in the time when the veil which hides Him should be removed from every eye. The disciple of Christ occupies a higher position than the prophets, for he sees directly Him whom men like Isaiah and Elijah saw only indirectly and afar off.†

It is strange that after marking with so firm a line, and so truly in the spirit of St. Paul, the difference between the two Testaments, Irenæus should have revived Jewish sacerdotalism, which, from his point of view, should have been as distinctly merged in a larger priesthood, as the Sabbath, circumcision, and prophecy were exchanged for their antitypes. In truth, if there was an institution incompatible with Christian liberty, and with the entire consecration of the life to God, it was that of the priesthood. It was intimately connected with the economy of coercion, of outward authority, of tutelage. It could not continue after that enfranchisement of the redeemed of Christ, so admirably described by the bishop of Lyons. And yet, none has done more than he to restore its power and influence. This inconsistency can be ascribed

* "Prophetas præstruebat in terra, assuescens hominem portare ejus Spiritum." ("Hæres.," iv. 28.) † Ibid., iv. 37.

only to the unworthy alarm aroused in his mind by Gnosticism, and the perils to which it exposed the Church. Let us guard ourselves, however, against any exaggeration. It was not the priesthood, properly speaking, which Irenæus sought to restore, for he recognised no other sacrifice for sin than that of Christ. The Lord's Supper was not in his eyes a renewal of the sacrifice of Calvary offered by the hands of a priest. No, all was fulfilled on the cross; peace is made between man and God. Jesus Christ has for ever abolished sacrifice in the old sense of the word, as He has abolished the Sabbath and ceremonial feasts.* The eucharistic meal is only a sacrifice of thanksgiving, an act of praise; it has no expiatory virtue. Even this idea of sacrifice as applied to the Lord's Supper was not without danger. It might become so blended with the idea of expiation, as to lead subsequently to the restoration of a sacrifice properly so called, which would be not simply the memorial, but also the daily repetition of the sin offering of Calvary. Irenæus is yet very far from this transformation of the holy communion, the first result of which was to introduce the priesthood into the Church; for there can be no true priesthood without a sacrifice. "We are bound," says Irenæus, "to bring our offerings to God, and to show ourselves grateful in all things to the Creator-God, offering Him the first-fruits of His creatures. The Church alone thus offers to God a true sacrifice."†

* "Cum abnuisset holocaustomata, et sacrificium, et oblationes, et adhuc etiam et neomenias, et sabbata et ferias et reliquam universam consequentem his observationem, intulit, suadens eis quæ salutaria sunt." ("Hæres.," iv. 32.)

† "Oportet enim nos oblationem Deo facere et in omnibus

"The bread and wine of the communion do not present to us the real body and blood of the Lord Jesus. They are only created things. Jesus, giving instruction or an example to His disciples, desired that the first fruits of creation should be offered to God; not that He had need of them, but practically to testify our sincere gratitude. He took the bread, which forms part of creation, and having given thanks, He said: 'This is my body.' In like manner, He declared the wine (also a created thing) to be His blood; and He thus teaches us what is the new oblation which the Church, under the New Covenant, presents to God, according to apostolic tradition, offering to Him who bestows on us the aliment of daily life the first-fruits of His gifts."* The meaning of this passage is clear. That which is offered to God is the first-fruits of created things, which, while they preserve their true nature, serve to express our gratitude to the God by whom our life is sustained. "Is it not evident," we read elsewhere, "that the eucharistic bread cannot be called the body of Christ, and that the cup cannot be called His blood, except it be acknowledged that the Son of God truly created the world, and that it is His Word which has made the tree to bear fruit, the stream to flow, the corn to grow, and

gratos inveniri fabricatori Deo, primitias earum quæ sunt in ejus creatura offerentes: in hanc oblationem Ecclesia sola puram offert fabricatori, offerens ei cum gratiarum actione ex creatura ejus." ("Hæres.," iv. 35.) *Προσφέρομεν δὲ αὐτῷ τὰ ἴδια*, as we read in the "Sacred Parallels" of John Damascena.

* "Eum qui est ex creatura panis accepit. Calicem similiter qui est ex ea creatura suum sanguinem confessus est, et Novi Testamenti novam docuit oblationem, quam Ecclesia ab apostolis accipiens in universo mundo offert Deo ei qui alimenta nobis præstat, primitias suorum munerum." (Ibid., iv. 32.)

the harvest to ripen? How can our adversaries assert that the flesh, nourished by the body and blood of the Lord, is only the prey of corruption? We offer to God that which belongs to Him, maintaining the relation and the oneness of the flesh and spirit. Just as, in fact, the bread which comes from the earth, so soon as the divine invocation is pronounced over it, is no longer ordinary bread, but becomes the eucharist, at once earthly and heavenly food, so our bodies which receive the eucharist are no longer corruptible, but possess the hope of the resurrection. We offer to God that which He does not need, but it is with a view to acknowledge His gifts, and thus to sanctify created things."* The mystical tone of the language of Irenæus does not conceal his true thought. Seeking to oppose the doctrine of the Gnostics, who condemned the corporeal creation, and regarded it as altogether evil, he exalts creation as the very work of the Word. It is His by peculiar right; it is, as it were, His own body and blood. The sacrifice of the New Covenant vindicates this high dignity of created things, for it consecrates to God by prayer the first-fruits of this same creation. These first-fruits are not materially transformed, they are simply raised to a new and celestial dignity by the divine invocation. Thus the eucharist in itself ennobles the material creation, and it may be concluded that our body, which belongs to this creation, is not in itself an element devoted to corruption. The eucharistic meal

* "Quomodo autem constabit eis, cum panem in quo gratiæ actæ sunt, corpus esse Domini sui et calicem sanguinis ejus, si non ipsum fabricatoris mundi Filium dicant, id est Verbum ejus. . . . Offerimus ei non quasi indigenti sed gratias agentes donationi ejus et sanctificantes creaturam." ("Hæres.," iv. 34.)

thus gives us a guarantee of our resurrection. The same thought is found further developed in another passage, which must be interpreted by the light of the texts already quoted. The gist of the argument is still the refutation of docetism. "They are mistaken, who despise the whole of creation, and who deny the resurrection of the body. Jesus would not, were this so, have redeemed us on the cross by His blood; the eucharistic cup would not then be the communication of His blood, nor the broken bread the communication of His body.* Being members of His body, we are nourished by the natural elements. These elements He supplies by making His sun to rise, and giving rain as it pleases Him. He has declared that this wine of the cup, which is a part of creation, is His blood, by which ours is nourished; and that this bread (part also of creation) is His body, by which ours is fed.† When the cup—in which wine and water are mixed—and the broken bread have received the divine blessing, we have in them the eucharist of the blood and body of Christ, which strengthens and sustains the substance of our body. Now, after this, can any assert that the flesh thus fed by the body and blood of Christ cannot receive the gift of God, which is eternal life? Just as the stock of the vine, planted in the earth, bears fruit in its season, and as the grain of wheat falls to the ground, dies, and then under the multiplying action of

* "Sic neque calix Eucharistiæ communicatio sanguinis ejus est." ("Hæres.," v. 2.) These words are thus rendered in the translation of the Fathers in the Genoude collection: "Ainsi ilne serait pas vrai que le vin fût changé en son sang dans l'Eucharistie" (vol. iii. p. 479). It is to be used freely with the passages.

† "Eum calicem qui est creatura, suum sanguinem qui effusus est, ex quo auget nostrum sanguinem." (Ibid., v. 2.)

the Spirit of God, which makes all things for the good of man, brings forth abundantly; just as this bread and this wine become, under the invocation of the Word of God, the eucharist, that is to say, the body and blood of Christ; so our bodies, when they shall have been broken, buried, and surrendered to dissolution in the grave, shall be raised again by the Word, in due time, to the glory of God the Father."*

In short, the material world is the creation of the Word; the bread and the wine which sustain our life come from Him; in offering to the Word the first-fruits of this creation, we are offering Him of His own. Consecrated by the divine Word, these elements are, as it were, His body and blood, but they undergo no change of substance. They nourish us just as common food nourishes, and they are designed to express our gratitude for the divine bounty, which enables us to find the support and sustenance of our life in the natural creation. We honour the work of the Word in natural creation, which is indeed in a manner an incarnation of the Word. If Irenæus is open to any reproach, it is that of having divested the holy communion too much of the idea of the sacrifice of Christ, and of having represented it rather as the memorial of creation than of redemption, in his great anxiety to confute Gnostic docetism. We do not deny that some of his expressions are susceptible of various interpretations, and that, pressed to the letter, they will lend some support to the theory of sacramental realism; but the general meaning of these various passages, when they

* "Hæres.," v. 2. The Eucharist is here presented not as the active principle of the resurrection, but as its pledge, since it is the Word who at the last day will restore our bodies to life.

are collated, is certainly that which we have given. In any case, whatever be the interpretation finally accepted, it is evident that the eucharistic feast presents, in the view of the bishop of Lyons, no analogy whatever with the renewal of the redemptive sacrifice.*

It is not sacrifice, properly speaking, it is spiritual authority which Irenæus is anxious to restore in order to raise a barrier against the intrusion of heresy. The Church is represented not as a society of believers, but as a hierarchy by divine right, though not possessing as yet any centre or fixed organisation. Irenæus says nothing as to the mode of admitting fresh converts; he offers no theory of baptism. It has been asserted that he accepted infant baptism, on the ground of the passage already quoted, in which he declares that Christ, by stooping Himself to the cradle, sanctified childhood. But this is a purely gratuitous supposition. He is sufficiently explicit, however, on the government

* In opposition to our interpretation, these words are adduced: "Verbum *quod* offertur Deo." ("Hæres.," iv. 33.) But this is a false reading. It should be: "*Per quod* offertur." This is the only reading that will agree with the doctrine of Irenæus. Neander, in his "History of Doctrines" (vol. i. pp. 250-253), yields, as we think, too much to the partisans of the Real Presence in his interpretation of the texts which we have quoted. He has not taken sufficient account of the general idea of creation given by Irenæus as being the work and manifestation of the Word. The Eucharist is designed to bring into full relief that divine aspect of the material creation which was so gloriously manifested in the incarnation. The operation of grace connects the material element with the spiritual agent by which it was produced. Our interpretation is confirmed by the fragment of Irenæus, discovered by Pfaff. We there read in so many words: Ἡ προσφορὰ τῆς Εὐχαριστίας οὐκ ἔστι σαρκικὴ ἀλλὰ πνευματική. (The offering of the Eucharist is not carnal, but spiritual.) If the bread and the wine of the Lord's Supper are compared to the body and blood of Christ, they are none the less designated the first fruits of the creation, and are called, Ἀντιτύπα.

of the Church. The apostles were not simply the chosen witnesses of Christ, the accredited representatives of the primitive Christianity, which is to be the perpetually abiding law of Christian thought and practice; they possessed also an organised and transmissible power. They were the heads of a permanent hierarchy, and are therefore invested with the personal gift of infallibility. "The Lord gave to His apostles the power of the Gospel; through them the truth is made known to us, even the doctrine of the Father and the Son, for the Lord said to them: 'He that heareth you heareth Me.'* Disciples of the truth, they are preserved from all error.† The Spirit has made them perfect.‡ Thus their doctrine is the rule of faith transmitted to the Church.§ They have refused all concession, like the doctor who will yield nothing to the evil he seeks to cure."‖

The doctrine of the apostles is contained first of all in their writings. Irenæus highly exalts the authority of the Gospels, which he compares in a famous text to the four cherubim, the four living ones of the Revelation.¶ But oral tradition is of no less importance than Holy Scripture. The heretics are no less culpable for rejecting the secondary than the primary authority.** The elders who gathered around St. John at Ephesus are placed on the same level as the sacred writers.

* "Apostolis Dominus dedit potestatem Evangelii." ("Hæres.," iii. "Præfatio.")

† "Extra omne mendacium sunt." (Ibid., iii. 5.)

‡ Ibid., iii. 12.

§ "Deus . . . quem apostoli tradunt, quem Ecclesia credidit." (Ibid., ii. 55.)

‖ Ibid., iii. 5.

¶ Ibid., iii. 11.

** "Traditionem, quæ est ab apostolis, quæ per successiones presbyterorum in Ecclesia custoditur." (Ibid., iii. 2.)

Polycarp and the men who heard the apostles are appealed to as decisive authorities.* Oral tradition may even take the place of holy Scripture, and entire nations are satisfied with it.† Thus is constituted the rule of faith, the echo of that apostolic tradition, written or oral, which was communicated to the Churches founded by the apostles.‡ These Churches are naturally the great depositaries of this tradition. If a discussion is raised on some minor question, reference must be made to the most ancient Churches, those which were honoured with the presence of the apostles, and from them a positive and decisive answer will be received on the point in dispute. Irenæus makes no distinction among the Churches of apostolic origin. If he refers chiefly to the Church of Rome, it is because that is the nearest to him, and time would fail him to produce the titles to confidence of other Churches of the same order. "It would be too long a process," he says, "to trace the succession of all the other Churches."§ He confines himself to that which is most accessible, and the best known and most illustrious because of its antiquity, and as having been founded by the two apostles whose equality he proclaims. "Peter," he says, "was the apostle of the same God as Paul."‖ We shall see in the discussions

* "Hæres.," iii. 3.

† "Multæ gentes barbarorum quorum qui in Christum credunt sine chartis et atramento scriptam habentes per Spiritum in cordibus suis salutem." (Ibid., iii. 4.)

‡ "Ecclesia autem omnis per universum orbem, hanc accepit ab apostolis traditionem." (Ibid., ii. 9; comp. iii. 4.)

§ "Sed quoniam valde longum est omnium Ecclesiarum enumerare successiones." (Ibid., iii. 3.)

‖ Ibid., iii. 3.

as to the right date of the Easter festival that Irenæus distinctly denies the primacy of the bishop of Rome.

It is unquestionable, however, that he contributed largely by his labours to the triumph of the hierarchy. The episcopate is recognised by him as the true apostolical succession in the Church. It has the same rights and the same authority as the apostolate. Irenæus is also the jealous and watchful guardian of tradition, which he traces back as a direct institution to the apostles themselves.* The episcopate is not regarded by Irenæus as the representative and democratic institution which it was in primitive times, when the office of bishop was not to be distinguished from that of elder. The same spirit which animated the apostolate breathes in the episcopate, which is but a continuation of it. Nay, more; the bishops are made the depositaries of the truth, in order to preserve intact the trust of tradition. "We must obey," said Irenæus, "the elders who were followers of the apostles, and whose is the episcopal succession. They have received the supernatural gift of truth, according to the good pleasure of the Father."† We must look doubtfully on those who have deviated from the main line of the succession, wherever they may be gathered together. We must treat them as heretics, holding evil doctrines; they are schismatics, self-exalted and self-satisfied, or they are hypocrites. All are alike estranged from the truth. The heretics

* Τῇ αὐτῇ τάξει καὶ τῇ αὐτῇ διδαχῇ ἤτε ἀπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων ἐν τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ παράδοσις, καὶ τὸ τῆς ἀληθείας κήρυγμα κατάντηκεν εἰς ἡμᾶς. ("Hæres.," iii. 3.)

† "Quapropter eis qui in Ecclesia sunt presbyteris obaudire oportet, his qui successionem habent ab apostolis, qui cum episcopatus successione charisma veritatis certum, secundum placitum Patris acceperunt." (Ibid., iv. 43.)

who bring strange fire, that is to say, strange doctrines to the altar of God, shall be consumed like Nadab and Abihu by fire from heaven.* To be outside the truth is to be outside the Church.† Holy Scripture does not suffice as the sole authority; it is only safely interpreted under the control of the episcopate.‡ The fear of heresy had urged on Irenæus to these extreme consequences of the doctrine of authority. The day of their triumph was not yet come, but he had sown seed which would germinate only too quickly, and which at this very time found in Rome itself a congenial soil and atmosphere.

Upon the inspiration of Holy Scripture Irenæus had no very original views. He appears to have accepted in all its rigour the theory of the literal inspiration of both the Old and New Testament. He believes in the famous legend of the Seventy translating the Bible, each man apart, and all arriving at the same version. He even asserts that, by virtue of the prophetic inspiration, the seventy translators of Alexandria had discovered the very text of the prophets.§ His noble theory of the expansion of particular inspiration since the coming of Christ, implies a freer mode of inspiration under the New Covenant. Irenæus does not preserve in his doctrine of the last days the same spirituality which we have admired in his conception of Judaism. He there exhibits prejudices worthy only of rabbinism, and interprets prophecy in the most material sense. Antichrist is to come in the end of the ages, which will coincide with the fall of the Roman Empire, for the mysterious name of the Beast is *Latinus*. In him will be concentrated

* "Hæres.," iv. 43.
† "Extra veritatem, id est extra Ecclesiam." (Ibid., iv. 62.)
‡ Ibid., iv. 43. § Ibid., iii. 25.

the evil of all past generations. After dwelling in Jerusalem three years and five days, he will be vanquished.* The millennium will commence after the resurrection of the just; it will be a purely earthly glory and felicity, after the sort depicted in such brilliant colours in the Jewish apocalypses. Irenæus does not hesitate to adopt the absurdities of Papias. "The vines will produce ten thousand branches, every branch ten thousand shoots, every shoot ten thousand clusters, every cluster ten thousand grapes, and every cluster, when pressed, will yield twenty-five measures of wine. And when a saint shall gather a grape, another grape shall say, 'I am yet more beautiful than that thou hast gathered; take me and bless the Lord.'" It shall be the same with the wheat.† The resurrection will be followed by the final judgment, the result of which will be the eternal punishment of the wicked, or their final separation from God.‡

Such is the theological system of Irenæus, a blending of sublime spirituality and Jewish superstition, which, while it contained the fullest and grandest statement of the doctrine of the Word, as held by the great teachers of the East, contributed more than any other system to precipitate the West down the incline of external authority and of the hierarchy. His determined opposition to Gnosticism was the real source both of his apocalyptic chimeras and of his hierarchical tendency.

* "Hæres.," v. 29, 30. † Ibid., v. 33. ‡ Ibid., v. 27.

§ II. *St. Hippolytus.** *Dionysius of Rome.*

St. Hippolytus, the famous bishop of the Port of Rome, who took a very important part in the ecclesiastical and religious controversies of his age, and who has bequeathed to us such invaluable documents on the heresies of the second century, may be regarded as a disciple of Irenæus. He united very extensive philosophical learning with the bias of an ardent polemic. He is, however, far inferior as a theologian to the bishop of Lyons. He does not treat the grave problems connected with the person of Christ with the same breadth and elevation as his predecessor. He rather follows the track of oriental speculation than that of the school of Lyons, which had succeeded better than any other in dissipating the clouds of abstract metaphysics, and

* We have already given a sketch of the life of Hippolytus, and established the authenticity of the "Philosophoumena." (See "Early Years of Christianity" and "Martyrs and Apologists.") His other writings are contained for the most part in the collection published by Fabricius. ("Sancti Hippolyti Opera," 2 vols. in fol. Hamburg, 1716.) See also Galland, "Bibliotheca Patrum," vol. ii. These writings consist mainly of fragments of commentaries on the Holy Scriptures, the treatise "De Antechristo," the book Περὶ τοῦ παντὸς οὐσίας, which is mentioned on the statue of the saint in the museum "Pio Clementi," at Rome; the "Homily on Noetus;" the treatise against "Bero;" the "Homily on the Theophany or the Baptism of Jesus." The fragments of the "Little Labyrinth" are found in Eusebius, "H. E.," vi. 20-28. Routh accompanies them with notes in his "Reliquiæ sacræ," vol. ii. 126-163. He erroneously ascribes them to Caius; in fact, the author of the treatise Περὶ τοῦ παντὸς οὐσίας, says that he wrote the "Little Labyrinth." Now we know from the statue of Hippolytus that he wrote a treatise on the "Essence of the Universe." We find a precious fragment of the commentary of Hippolytus on the "Proverbs" in vol. vii. of the "Nova Bibliotheca Patrum" of Angelo Maï (pp. 71-77). See the important dissertation in Bunsen on the writings of Hippolytus ("Hippolytus," vol. i. 5th letter), and the passage referring to him in Dorner's great work (pp. 605-630)

bringing into clearer light the harmony of the human and the divine in Jesus. Hippolytus is primarily an orator. His exposition always assumes the somewhat diffuse form of the homily; he delights in abrupt turns. He uses these with admirable effect, but a little to the detriment of the precision of his thought. On one point he entirely eclipses Irenæus; his conception of the Church bears the impress of the noble liberalism of the early age of the Church; his one aim is to arrest the fatal retrogression to Jewish sacerdotalism and theocratic rule.

Hippolytus' idea of God is as abstract as that of Justin and Athenagoras. He regards Him rather as the eternal reason than as eternal love. "God," he says, "is primarily one and alone. He produced all beings, and He governs all; no being can be traced back so far as His.* All was in Him, and He was all."† Hippolytus, starting from this almost Neo-Platonist conception of God, has no solid basis on which to rest the pre-existence of the Word. The Son is not necessary to the fulness of the Divine life, as in the systems in which Divine love requires an object external to the world—an eternal object. The Word is not confounded with the world, since it exists antecedently to it, and proceeds not from nothing, but from the Father Himself, of whom He is the perfect expression, the living utterance; but He does not possess a distinct existence from all eternity. He exists first as the creative thought, then He becomes the instrument of creation, the sovereign agent of the Divine will, to

* *Θεὸς εἷς ὁ πρῶτος καὶ μόνος καὶ ἁπάντων ποιητὴς καὶ κύριος, σύγχρονον ἔσχεν οὐδὲν ἑν.* ("Phil.," x. 32.)

† *Πάντα καὶ ἦν ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ ἦν τὸ πᾶν.* ("Contra Noet.," 10.)

call into life contingent beings. He is thus a person, not simply an idea, as in all the forms of Platonism. The God who dwelt alone, willed to create the world. He thought.* By this thought He begat the Word, not simply as an utterance or sound, but as the inner thought of the universe.† The Word alone was produced by the Being, for the Father was the Being; the Word came forth from Him to produce all existence. He possessed in Himself all divine ideas. Thus He was able, when the Father commanded that the world should be created, to produce all beings according to the good pleasure of God.‡ The Word shares in the impassibility, the absolute immobility of the Father, who fills in the theology of Hippolytus the place of the prime motor in that of Aristotle. The divine life cannot be limited; it is always identical with itself, infinite and absolute.§ The bishop of the Port of Rome confounds together immutability of essence and of action, and does not comprehend that the moral nature maintains its unity unimpaired amidst the most diversified modes of operation, according to the diversity of the relations in which it is placed. We shall find that this abstract conception of the divinity largely influenced his idea of the incarnation.

The Word is distinguished from the world, inasmuch as He came forth from the Father, while the world

* Ὁ κόσμον ἐννοηθείς. ("Contra Noet.," 10.)

† Λόγον πρῶτον ἐννοηθεὶς ἀπογεννᾷ, οὐ λόγον, ὡς φονὴν, ἀλλ' ἐνδιάθετον τοῦ παντὸς λογισμόν. ("Phil.," x. 33.)

‡ Ἔχει ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὰς ἐν τῷ πατρὶ προεννοηθείσας ἰδέας, ὅθεν κελεύοντος πατρὸς γίνεσθαι κόσμον τὸ κατὰ ἐν Λόγος ἀπετελεῖτο ἀρέσκων Θεῷ. (Ibid., x. 33.)

§ Τό γὰρ ἄπειρον κατ' οὐδένα τρόπον ἢ λόγον ἐπιδέχεται κίνησιν. ("Contra Bero," Fabricius's edition, vol. i. p. 225.)

came from nothing. Thus He may with reason call Himself God, being of the essence of God.* Not that there are therefore two Gods; no: the Word is like the light which springs from light, as the stream from the source, the ray from the sun. There is but one power, which is that of the All in all. Now the Father is the All in all, from whom proceeds the power of the Word. All things were made by the Word, but He alone proceeds from the Father. "There are not, then, two Gods, but one God in two persons. The third economy is the grace of the Holy Spirit."† The Father commands, the Son obeys, the Holy Spirit enlightens. The Father is over all, the Son acts by all, the Holy Spirit is in all. The Holy Spirit constitutes a third divine person, of whose nature and mode of operation Hippolytus gives no explanation.

The constituent and primordial elements of finite existence are fire, air, water, earth.‡ The angels are formed of the two first. Man, who is the king of the terrestrial creation, is composed of the four elements. Thus he shares in the condition of all that is multiple and divisible; he is by nature subject to death. The Divine and immortal life does not belong to him by natural right; it can only become his as a new gift. God might have made him God directly, communicating to him that derived divinity which is not to be confounded with his absolute, infinite, immutable being; but He did not so will it. The divinity is to be

* Τούτου ὁ λόγος μόνος ἐξ αὐτοῦ· διὸ καὶ θεὸς, οὐσία ὑπάρχων θεοῦ. Ὁ δὲ κόσμος ἐξ οὐδενός· διὸ οὐ θεός. ("Phil.," x. 33.)

† Δύο μὲν οὐκ ἐρῶ θεοῦς, ἀλλ' ἕνα, πρόσωπα δὲ δύο, οἰκονομίαν δὲ τρίτην, τὴν χάριν τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος. ("Contra Noet.," 14.)

‡ "Phil.," x. 33.

the crown of his being, a new gift.* Doubtless man has enjoyed ever since his creation a certain illumination from the Word; he bears the image of the Word,† but this resemblance is more or less external. The divine element in man is not that light which, according to St. John, lightens every man that cometh into the world, and which constitutes, in fact, his higher life. It is not that sacred germ of which Justin speaks, that divine seed which belongs to human nature. Man is naturally destitute of the Word, and the Word becomes his only by special gift of grace.

Adam, born to liberty and entrusted with the free control of his destiny, falls by his own fault. Man, as created by God, was a free being, endowed with liberty of choice. This freedom became the cause of evil, which is only a contingency; for it would have had no existence had man not sinned. It had no existence in the beginning, it supervened, as it were, accidentally.‡ Hippolytus is very moderate in his views of the nature and consequences of original sin. He admits the fall of humanity as a fact, but does not define its scope or character.

The work of salvation is referred directly to the Word. It is He who accomplishes it from first to last; the two Covenants form but one continuous and progressive revelation. He first gave the law for man's correction and instruction; then prophecy—which illuminates the past no less than the future.§ "The prophets have

* Ἄνθρωπον θέλων, ἄνθρωπόν σε ἐποίησεν· εἰ δὲ θέλεις καὶ θεὸς γενέσθαι, ὑπάκουε τῷ πεπυϊήκοτι. ("Phil.," x. 33.)

† Ibid.

‡ Ὁ δὲ γενόμενος ἄνθρωπος ζῷον αὐτεξούσιον ἦν . . . ἐν τῷ θέλειν καὶ νομίζειν τι κακὸν τὸ κακὸν ὀνομάζεται, οὐκ ἦν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἀλλ' ἐπιγινόμενον (Ibid., x. 33.)

§ Ibid.

become, as it were, our eyes, to hold forth to the eye of faith the mysteries of the Word; it is from Him their wisdom was derived."* In all this moral education of the human race, the Word has never ceased to respect the liberty of man, in His efforts to bring him to obedience.† He came the first time by the lawgivers, the second time by the prophets, the third time by the Gospel, revealing Himself without a veil.‡ The Father sent Him in person, that instead of speaking any longer through symbols more or less obscure, He might render Himself in a manner visible, and thus gain the recognition of the world.§ The Word, in becoming incarnate, took upon Himself true human nature, became of the seed of Adam, but without laying aside the impassibility of the Divine nature. This was neither surrendered nor destroyed; it remained what it was, not being susceptible of any modification.‖ The human flesh did not become Divine, neither did the Divine clothe itself in the passivity of flesh.¶ The distinction of the two natures remained intact and absolute in the unity of the person. This is a mystery which cannot be explained: let us be content with recognising that in the incarnate Word the Divinity is the active, the flesh the passive, principle. The Word

* Προφῆται ὀφθαλμοὶ ἡμῶν ἐγένοντο προορῶντες διὰ πίστεως τὰ τοῦ λόγου μυστήρια. ("De Antechristo." Fabricius's edition, i. 5.)

† Οὐ βίᾳ ἀλλ' ἐπ' ἐλευθερίαν. ("Phil.," x. 33.)

‡ Ἑαυτον φανερῶς ἐπιδεικνύς. (Saint Hippolytus, "Comment. in Prov." Angelo Maï, "Nova Bibl. Patrum," vol. vii. 75.)

§ Αὐτοψεὶ φανερωθῆναι. ("Phil.," x. 33.)

‖ Τὸ γὰρ θεῖον, ὡς ἦν πρὸ σαρκώσεως, ἔστι καὶ μετὰ σάρκωσιν κατὰ φυσιν ἄπειρον, ἄσχετον, ἀπαθές. ("Contra Bero," p. 227.)

¶ "Neque caro per se sine Verbo subsistere poterat, quia in Verbo habebat τὴν σύστασιν, id est in Verbo subsistebat." ("Contra Noet.," chap. 15.)

communicated to the flesh the force of the Divinity, which was not abated by His humiliation.* Just as thought makes use for its expression of the physical organs of language, without having any analogy with them, and by a process to us inexplicable, so the Word, in the incarnation, employs the true human flesh which He has assumed.† His body is in a manner His vesture.‡ In His incarnation He passed through the womb of the Virgin.§ "The Divinity of Jesus accomplishes those Divine acts of which His flesh is by nature incapable, and His humanity performs the human acts which have in their essence nothing divine."‖ It would not be possible to give expression to more positive dualism than this, in the account of the incarnation of the Word. Nevertheless Hippolytus insists strongly upon the reality of His humanity. The Redeemer chose to pass through all the stages of human life, according to the beautiful thought of Irenæus, in order to be the model of every age. He took upon Him in the womb of the Virgin a human organism as well as a reasonable soul;¶ and He thus made manifest in the world the perfect man.** Though God, He was subject to the conditions of human life. He thirsted, was an hungered, and weary; He was not only acquainted with

* Τῆς ἰδίας θεότητος ἐμποιήσας τῇ σαρκὶ τὴν ἐνέργειαν, οὐ περιγραφομένην αὐτῇ διὰ τὴν κένωσιν. ("Contra Bero," p. 226.)

† Ibid., pp. 227, 228.

‡ Ἔνδυμα ἔχων τὸ ἀνθρώπινον σῶμα. ("Prædicatio in Theophania," p. 262.)

§ Ὁ θεὸς λόγος σαρκωθεὶς διέβη καλῶς μήτραν παρθένου. ("Comm. in Prov." Maï, "Nova Bibl. Patrum," vii. 75.)

‖ Θεότητι μὲν τὰ θειᾶ, διὰ τῆς αὐτοῦ παναγίας σαρκὸς καὶ τὰ ἀνθρωπίνα ἀνθρωπότητι. ("Contra Bero," p. 230.)

¶ "Contra Noet.," 18; Maï, "Nova Bibl. Patrum," 74.

** Ὡς τὸν τέλειον ἄνθρωπον ἀνανεώσας ἐν κόσμῳ. (Ibid.)

fear, but with tears and trembling; He prayed that the cup He had come into the world to drink, might pass from Him, and in the anguish of His soul the sweat became blood upon His brow. He who knew what was in man was betrayed by Judas. He who had received as God the homage of the high-priest Caiaphas, was calumniated by him. The judge of all the earth was the butt of the scoffs of Herod. He who bore our griefs, was delivered over by Pilate to be scourged. He whom myriads of angels obeyed, was struck on the face by the rude soldiery. He who stretched out the heavens as a curtain, was nailed by His own people to the cross. The Spirit, who is one with the Father, lifts to the Father a cry of anguish, and He who said, "I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again," bows His head to death.*

Hippolytus attributes a unique efficacy to the death of Christ in the work of salvation. "The God of the universe became man, in order that by suffering in the flesh, and being made subject to grief, He might redeem our race which was sold unto death." † This doctrine of redemption is utterly vague. Hippolytus does not make a single allusion to a ransom paid to God Himself. He sees in Jesus Christ first of all a living law, which reveals to us the true good underlying all the sufferings of the human race, and death in particular. "He has humanly fulfilled all righteousness." ‡ He has restored a perfect humanity. "Like a skilful

* "Contra Noet.," 18.

† Διὰ τοῦτο γέγονεν ἄνθρωπος ὁ τῶν ὅλων θεὸς, ἵνα σαρκὶ μὲν παθητῇ πάσχων ἅπαν ἡμῶν τῷ θάνατῳ παθὲν λυτρώσηται γένος. ("Contra Bero.," p. 227; "Contra Noet.," 17.)

‡ Ὁ μόνος ἀνθρωπίνως πάσαν δικαιοσύνην πληρώσας. (Maï, "Nova Bibl. Patrum," vii. 73.)

physician, he endeavours to instruct the ignorant, and to bring back into the right path those who are going astray. He is to be found of all who seek Him, and opens the door to every man who knocks with a pure heart. He rejects none of His servants. He does not esteem the rich more than the poor, as if poverty were any ground for contempt. He does not disdain the barbarian or the eunuch, as though he had forfeited his manhood. Woman is not rejected, though she was the mother of transgression, nor her husband, because of his disobedience. He is willing to save all without exception, so as to make one perfect man after the heavenly pattern."* Thus perfect man becomes God,† and it is to procure for us this eternal and truly divine life He suffered on the cross. This His suffering saves us, not as an expiatory sacrifice, but inasmuch as it is the highest manifestation of His holiness, and the greatest demonstration to our hearts of His love. Salvation becomes ours by faith united to good works.‡ After His resurrection He returned into heaven; thence He will come again to judge the world, and to restore to life these mortal bodies, the imperishable seed of which is buried in the dust.§ Hippolytus depicts in detail the great coming conflicts of the Church with Antichrist, who, five hundred years after our era, is to come out of the tribe of Dan and to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem.‖ Hippolytus delights in interpreting the most obscure

* Εἰς ἕνα τέλειον ἄνθρωπον καλῶν. ("De Antechristo," p. 6.)

† Εἰ οὖν ἀθάνατος γέγονεν ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἔσται καὶ θεός. ("In Theophania," p. 264.)

‡ Maï, "Nova Bibl. Patrum.," vii. 75.

§ Ἀντὰ τὰ σώματα ἀνιστῶν. (Περὶ τοῦ παντός, p. 221.)

‖ "De Antechristo," p. 9.

oracles of Daniel and of the Revelation. The righteous and the wicked, while awaiting this final consummation, are in an intermediate place. The former enjoy already perfect happiness under the guardianship of the holy angels, while the latter anticipate in their present torments the eternal anguish which awaits them.* The righteous will be made blessed for ever upon a renovated earth.†

The part which Hippolytus took in the violent controversies of the Church of Rome is indicative of the breadth of his views with regard to the Church. This does not present itself to him as a religious monarchy despotically governed by the episcopate. His strenuous opposition to the bishop of Rome sets aside the idea of any primacy belonging to him. Nor does Hippolytus admit that the bishops have the power of the keys, so that they are invested with peculiar authority to dispense the pardons of God. He thus distinctly repudiates everything like sacerdotalism. He does not allow that the office has any intrinsic virtue apart from the spiritual qualifications befitting a Christian and a bishop. Neither does he conceive of the Church as an impersonal institution, giving shelter alike to piety and impiety. He repels indignantly the dangerous metaphor of Callisthus, who likened it to Noah's ark, into which entered both clean and unclean animals. He regards it as a holy fellowship of believers.‡ The Church, which finds its actual realisation in the various particular Churches, is compared by him to a great ship, with Jesus Christ for its pilot and the cross for

* Περὶ τοῦ παντός, pp. 220-222. "Phil.," x. 34.
† Περὶ τοῦ παντός, p. 222. ‡ "Phil.," ix. 12.

its colours.* In another image, he compares it to the woman of the Apocalypse, clothed with divine light as with the sun. The twelve stars on her brow are the apostles, and she travails incessantly in birth till the Word be formed in every Christian heart.† The rock on which she rests is Jesus Christ alone;‡ Hippolytus recognises no other.

The supreme authority in matters of religion is Holy Scripture, the sacred fountain of truth. Inspired by God, this is above oral tradition.§ The Church's chief mission has been to transmit these sacred oracles.‖ St. Hippolytus in the writings which have come down to us does not speak of any sacrament but baptism. He never separates the sign from the thing signified. If he says that water with the Holy Spirit is an element of regeneration,¶ he does not intend any physical or magical operation, for he insists strongly on the spiritual conditions which are required. "Thou shalt be regenerate if thou art no murderer, nor idolater, nor licentious. He who goes down with faith into the waters of regeneration, forsakes evil and gives himself to Jesus Christ."**

The theology of Hippolytus reflects the various in-

* Ἔχει γὰρ μεθ' ἑαυτῆς τὸν ἔμπειρον κυβερνήτην Χριστόν. ("De Antechristo," 25.)

† Οὐ πάνεται ἡ ἐκκλησία γεννῶσα ἐκ καρδίας τὸν λόγον. (Ibid., p. 30.)

‡ Τῇ πνευματικῇ πέτρᾳ, Χριστῷ. (Maï, "Nova Bibl. Patrum," 73.)

§ Ὡς ἐξ ἁγιᾶς πηγῆς. ("De Antechristo," p. 4.) Hippolytus confronts the heretics first with the authority of Scripture: εἰ μὴ πρῶτον μὲν ἀντέπιπτον αὐτοῖς αἱ θεῖαι γραφαί. (Ex "Parvo Labyrintho," apud Eusebius, "H. E.," v. 28. Routh, "Reliq.," ii. 129.) He quotes only as subordinate to this the testimony of the Fathers: Οὐ πιστεύουσιν ἁγιῳ πνεύματι λελέχθαι τὰς θείας γραφάς. (Ibid., p. 134.)

‖ Παρ' ὧν κατηχήθησαν μὴ τοιαύτας παρέλαβον τὰς γραφάς. (Ibid.)

¶ Δι' ὕδατος καὶ ἁγίου πνεύματος. ("De Theophania," p. 264.)

** Καταβαίνων μετὰ πίστεως. (Ibid.)

fluences at work on the Church of his day. It vacillates between that of Origen and that of Irenæus, and indeed on more than one point coincides with that of Tertullian, minus the fervent flame and piercing point. It lacks coherence and originality. But it bears out its date, for it evidently belongs to an age in which the East and West were still in constant and close communication. The controversialist and the preacher in Hippolytus decidedly outweigh the thinker.

We have only one more theologian to mention belonging to the Western Church: this is Dionysius, the bishop of Rome (257-269).* His two predecessors, Cornelius and Stephen, distinguished themselves only in ecclesiastical controversies. Dionysius took his stand as the vigilant guardian of orthodoxy, not only against heresy, but also against the school of Origen, whose brilliant representative was Dionysius of Alexandria. He also completely repudiated the opinions of Tertullian and of Hippolytus as to the non-eternity of the Word. After presiding over the council held at Rome, to inquire into the charge brought by the Egyptian bishops

* Dorner ("Lehre von Pers. Christ.," i. p. 757), places Zeno, bishop of Verona, before Dionysius of Rome, principally on the ground of his doctrine, which he deems to be ante-Nicene. According to Zeno, the Word is the full manifestation of the Father, his *objective ego;* they might be spoken of as two seas mingling their waters. This outward manifestation, however, would not have taken place but for the creation. Thus Zeno approaches Tertullian on this latter point, while he differs from him by his affirmation of the equality of the Father and the Son. His conception of the incarnation is the same as that of Hippolytus; but other portions of his writings recall Lactantius, Hilarius, and Basil, and confirm the passage of St. Ambrose, referring to a certain Zeno, his contemporary. (5th Letter to Syagrius.) The chronological question is still too doubtful to allow us to place Zeno among the theologians of the first three centuries.

against the views of Dionysius of Alexandria, Dionysius of Rome wrote a circular letter to the complainants. Some fragments of this letter have been preserved by Athanasius.* The doctrine of the Trinity is there for the first time defined with exactness. Dionysius first repudiates the extravagant spiritualism of the Sabellians, who admit only a threefold manifestation of the Deity, instead of recognising three divine persons. Then he rejects the gross tritheism which makes of these persons three distinct divinities.† Lastly, he strongly condemns the opinion of both Tertullian and Hippolytus, as to the production of the Word at the moment of creation. He asserts His eternal divinity.‡ "It is not lawful to divide into three deities the glorious and divine Monad. It is necessary that the Word should be united to the God of the universe, that the Holy Spirit should dwell and abide in Him, and that the sacred Triad should be resolved at length into a sublime unity in the Almighty God, the Creator of all beings. We must believe in one God, the Father Almighty, in Jesus Christ His Son, and in the Holy Spirit. The Word is one with the God of the universe.§ Thus do we hold fast at once the divine Triad and the holy doctrine of the divine unity."‖ Dionysius of Rome simplified the matter by merely affirming the existence of the Trinity, without giving any doctrinal

* The fragments of Dionysius of Rome are found in Athanasius: "De decretis synodis Nic.," c. 4. (Routh, "Reliquiæ," iii. p. 373.)

† Routh, iii. p. 373.

‡ *Οὐ μεῖον δ' ἂν τις καταμέμφοιτο καὶ τοὺς ποίημα τὸν υἱὸν εἶναι δοξάζοντας καὶ γεγονέναι τὸν Κύριον.* (Routh, "Reliquiæ," iii. p. 374.) *Ἀεὶ δὲ ἦν.* (Ibid., 375.)

§ *Ἕδη καὶ τὴν θείαν τοιάδα εἰς ἕνα, ὥσπερ εἰς κορυφήν τινα, συγκεφαλαιοῦσθαι.* (Ibid.)

‖ Ibid., 377.

construction of it. The image of the triangle satisfied him; he thus avoided all the difficulties which the question of subordination might raise. While he writes in Greek, his spirit is plainly that of a Western Father and of a bishop of Rome. He contents himself with a clear and emphatic formula, which meets the requirements of those whom the teaching of Hippolytus, Origen, and Tertullian had roused to opposition. His doctrine forms nevertheless a very important link in the chain of doctrinal development, which was to find its completion in Athanasius and in the decretals of Nicæa. He is the forerunner of the school of authoritative metaphysics. With him the age of free doctrinal creations seems to pass away. Dionysius of Rome is the most complete exponent of the genius of Western Rome. We find in him the teacher in whom that genius is most fitly expressed, and who, upon the boundary between two great periods in the history of Christianity, stands like the first landmark of the new path on which the church is about to enter, a path of subserviency to official creeds and to external authorities.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SCHOOL OF CARTHAGE.

§ I. *The System of Tertullian.**

THE history of thought presents no stronger contrast than that between the school of Carthage and the school of Alexandria. The doctrinal basis is, indeed, the same: a clear statement of evangelical facts, with the utmost possible vagueness and variety in the explanation of those facts. The same moral animus also pervades the two theologies, which, both alike, protest against Gnostic determinism. But the general spirit and method of the two systems differ absolutely. The mystic idealism, full of speculative boldness, of men like Clement and Origen, is exchanged for a determined realism, which fears to go beyond its depth, and shows a strong tendency to materialism. The motto of the school of Carthage, or to speak more correctly of its illustrious founder, is that witty saying applied to the quintessence of perfect love: "Thicken religion." The subtle and brilliant metaphysics of the great Alexandrines is but a bodiless shade in the view of

* Apart from the works of Tertullian, which I quote from the Leipzig edition (Leopold, 1839), and the general works on doctrinal history already cited, I may mention Neander's "Antignosticus" (Berlin, 1849). See also M. Réville's articles in the "Revue de Théologie," Strasburg (1857, 1858).

Tertullian. Like Thomas, he would handle the truth for himself, and see it with his bodily eyes. If I have not thus sensibly realised the divine, he seems to say, it has no existence for me. Hence the craving for an external authority, a tangible something; hence the strange materialisation both of God and of the soul; hence the cabalistic conception of baptismal regeneration, and the fanatic doctrine of the final issues of history, which are the characteristic features of the theology of Tertullian. These grave defects were the secret of the strength of his influence in the succeeding period, when there was so deep a decadence from primitive Christian spirituality. They are to a large extent redeemed, however, by the deep earnestness of his tone, by the vigour of his religious thought, and the incomparable eloquence in which he clothes his ideas. On some points Tertullian contributed to the normal development of Christian doctrine; he also made his mark on the theology of his age. In spite of his adhesion to Montanism, he still exerted the strongest influence on the theological thought of the Western Church of the third century, because his peculiar views bore only upon secondary points, while the general tendency of his system was in perfect harmony with the spirit of the age. He always thought and wrote with the intensity of a partisan, as the determined and deadly opponent of Gnosticism. The title of his most famous controversial treatise might be applied to his entire system, "Contra Marcionem." This is the Alpha and Omega of Tertullian's writings. His invariable method is to place himself at the antipodes of his adversaries. Gnosticism delights in pure speculation,

and mocks at texts and traditions. Tertullian exalts, beyond measure, the authority of the past, and makes antiquity, in matters of religion, the criterion of truth. Gnosticism starts with dualism and ends in docetism. Tertullian represents corporeal life as inseparable from the spiritual life in all stages of being, even in the highest, and on this ground exalts the flesh, though he seeks to mortify it by asceticism. Gnosticism degrades and despises Judaism. Tertullian lifts the old Testament so high, that the difference between the law and the gospel is almost effaced. Neander has therefore with justice named him the anti-gnostic. Herein lies his power, his passion, but his weakness also. It is always dangerous when we come to regard the truth no longer as it is in itself, but as it appears to the partial eye of the polemic.

Throughout the whole of his theology, Tertullian is seeking, not the idea, but the fact itself. He reverts to this perpetually, like a determined advocate in the great doctrinal suit which is pleaded before Christendom. He is anxious to vindicate the facts alone, caring very little about the explanation. This tendency is very marked in the discussion of the ques ion—what are the sources whence we may lawfully derive our knowledge of the truth? He replies: Avaunt, philosophy and reasoning. Let us take as our guide, nature, which is for us the first reality; but let us take it as it came from the hand of God, before it has been deformed and transformed by civilisation and its impure refinements. Nothing is more beautiful or more divine than the primitive order of nature. Thus the work of Christ consists exclusively in re-establishing and

restoring that order.* The end of the ages will bring us back to the beginning, like a perfected circle. The Redeemer is the Alpha and Omega; that is to say, the first and last word of religious history is one and the same. Let us, then, interrogate nature, whether in the outer world, or in our soul, but rising, as we do so, above culture and science, which have more or less falsified nature. The Bible is a divine book, but it has been interpolated by Satan.† Let us seek to read the original text in the flower of the fields, or in the fresh, artless feeling of the human heart, uncorrupted by education. The divine nature will speak to us by both voices, and will proclaim to us the true God, who created both mind and matter, and who will restore us by the Saviour to Himself. "The human race, as a whole, knows the God of Moses, even though it knows not Moses or his book. The soul is more ancient than philosophy; conscience is the first gift bestowed on it by God. God has never been hidden, never has He left mankind. He has been always apprehended, heard, contemplated by every soul that has not turned away from Him. God has His witnesses in all that we are, and all that surrounds us.‡ True nature is a divine reality. The more closely then we return to this true nature, rising above all that has been superadded to it, the more we come to realise again its primitive condition, the more nearly shall we approach the divine. It follows that antiquity is itself an evidence

* "In Christo omnia revocantur ad initium." (Tertullianus. "De monogam.," chap. 5.)

† "Diabolo, interpolatore naturæ." ("De cultu femin.," i. 8.)

‡ "Ante anima quam prophetia. Habet Deus testimonia, totum hoc quod sumus et in quo sumus." ("Adv. Marc.," i. 10.)

of truth. That which was is the rule of that which is to be.* What is a new God, but a false God?† In all things truth precedes its image; imitation comes after the reality.‡ It would be absurd, then, to pretend that heresy is anterior to sound doctrine. On closer examination, the gospel is found to be no new thing. It is new only in the ultimate form which it gives to religion, but its essential doctrines are discovered in the most ancient traditions of the human race. There has been no unforeseen event, as Marcion asserts, coming suddenly upon the world. "Nothing that comes from God is sudden, since all forms part of a well-ordered plan."§

The chain of revelation shows an unbroken succession of links running through all the ages; a principle of continuity is plainly traceable through the whole religious evolution from Adam to Jesus Christ. In reality, it is one and the same religion, always identical with itself, which has been continuously developed; thus its antiquity may be appealed to as its first claim to our confidence. It is strange to see Tertullian insisting so strongly upon the continuity of the religious idea, when we remember his ordinary style of thought and writing, in which he delights in antithesis, and seems only to sew the new piece of the gospel into the old garment of nature, in order to rend the latter in pieces by the former.

* "Omnis res anterior posteriori regulam præministravit." ("Adv. Marc.," i. 9.)

† "Quid Deus novus nisi falsus?" (Ibid., 8.)

‡ "In omnibus veritas imaginem antecedit." ("De præscript.," 29.)

§ "Nihil a Deo subitum, quia nihil a Deo non dispositum." ("Adv. Marc.," iii. 2.)

Holy Scripture is the most ancient religious tradition in the order of revelations. Hence the immutable confidence which we should place in it. "Moses lived nine hundred years before Saturn; how much more ancient then must he be than all his descendants; hence unquestionably the most divine teacher is this Moses, who records the wanderings of mankind ever since the world began, designating each birth, each name, each period, and proving the divinity of his work by the inspiration of his word."* Thus divine inspiration combines with antiquity to give supreme authority to Holy Scripture. Tertullian believes in literal verbal inspiration. "Our sacred Scriptures," he says, "are the very words and letters of God."† The same divine spirit was the leader of Moses and of Paul.‡ The Holy Spirit has so ordered His Scriptures, that they instruct us in the development and origin of things.§ In his "Apology," Tertullian closely connects the authority of Scripture with that of nature and of conscience. After appealing to the testimony of the naturally Christian conscience, he adds: "It was the will of God that we should come to a more full and deep understanding of His plan and purposes; thus He added to nature the instrument of a written revelation.‖ He sent from the beginning men, worthy by their innocence and uprightness, to know and reveal Him, and on these He poured forth in floods His Divine Spirit. The words spoken, and the miracles

* "Multo antiquior Moyses etiam Saturno." ("De anima," 28.)
† "Inspice Dei voces, litteras nostras." ("Apol.," 31.) "Dei litteras." (Ibid., 2.)
‡ "De oratione," 17.
§ "Adv. Hermog.," 22.
‖ "Instrumentum adjecit litteraturæ." ("Apol.," 18.)

wrought by these men to establish faith in the Godhead, remain in sacred literature as in a treasury open to all. The primary authority of the book is conferred upon it by its high antiquity.* The last of the prophets ceased to speak when the first of the Greek philosophers appeared. These were acquainted with the sacred Hebrew Scriptures, as may be perceived from their writings, for error itself is made up of the materials of truth.† Tertullian acknowledges, indeed, that the miraculous character of the sacred books, which is so evident in their prophetic portion, sets upon them a seal still more divine than mere antiquity. Nevertheless, it is really upon the latter evidence that he lays the greatest stress. The whole of this theory of inspiration is full of contradictions. On the one hand, we have the theory of absolute theopneustia, the very words being dictated by the Holy Spirit, though no difference be shown between the spoken and written words of the prophet. On the other hand, this literal inspiration does not establish any radical difference between the Bible of historic revelation and the Bible of nature and of conscience, since the former is but the complement of the latter. The divine in the supernatural is not opposed to the divine in the natural order, or rather, both are in essential harmony with the true nature, whether we discover it in the world and in the heart of man, or whether it be restored by revelation. Tertullian always seeks to go back to the divine original, to the unfalsified reality. Hence the predominant part he assigns to antiquity as the standard

* "Apol.," 18.

† "Omnia adversus veritatem de veritate constructa sunt." (Ibid., 47.)

of truth. His ideas on canonicity are not more exact than those of his contemporaries: they are vague and variable.*

The same considerations lead him to enunciate a doctrine of tradition so narrow that its result was, in spite of his ulterior protest, to inaugurate the triumph of the hierarchy. His "Treatise on Prescriptions" is the most signal service ever rendered to religious despotism. The title of this writing is taken from the language of the bar. The former advocate of Carthage would transfer to the great religious controversy, the convenient process by which judicial cases are cut short when they threaten to be unduly prolonged. Such a proceeding is perfectly legitimate in the sphere of inferior interests, which are necessarily regulated by a relative and limited justice. It is otherwise when eternal truth is at stake; then no prescription is admissible, no mouth may be closed, no inquiry arrested in the mind. We must not charge Tertullian with inconsistency with himself, because, after giving fuller recognition than any other teacher to the authority of conscience, he seeks to make us bend under the yoke of tradition, and fetters us in our research. Here, again, he is faithful to his principle of the conformity of truth to the primeval nature of things. That which he regards as primitive and natural, is the spontaneous assent of the soul to the gospel truth contained in the sacred writings. All that goes beyond this assent, every essay of speculation, takes us out of the true

* Tertullian quotes as inspired the Book of Enoch ("De idolat.," 4; "De cultu femin.," i. 3), the Sibylline books ("Ad nation.," ii. 42), the "Pastor" of Hermas ("De orat.," 12). He does not quote the epistle of James, those of Peter, or the minor epistles of John.

order of nature. He uses, but in a peculiar sense, the language of the Book of Proverbs, that God has made man upright, but that he has sought out many inventions. The upright heart is the naturally Christian conscience, which worships the God of the Bible. The many inventions are arguments and philosophies treating of divine realities to explain them away. His treatise on Prescriptions is in full harmony with his sublime treatise on the Testimony of the Soul. That which Tertullian would prohibit at all costs, is the thorough investigation of religious truth. If it is said to us: Seek, and ye shall find, this commandment applies only to the period preceding the formation of the faith.* Jesus uttered these words at the commencement of His ministry, before He had fully established His divinity. The same precept applies equally to the pagans, who, in their profound ignorance, cannot know Christ directly. But the Master did not intend to invite us to indefinite inquiry; we are to seek till we have found, and then to content ourselves with the faith which will thenceforward suffice us.† We have but to guard our treasure. "Whosoever believes has found; whosoever seeks has not yet found, or he has lost again that which he had found."‡ So long as we stand knocking at the door, we show that it has not yet been opened to us. It is only lawful to seek within the enclosure of truth; the woman of the parable did not go beyond her house to look for her lost piece of

* "De præscript.," 8.

† "Quærendum est, donec invenias, et credendum, ubi inveneris." (Ibid., 9.)

‡ "Nemo quærit, nisi qui aut non habuit, aut perdidit." (Ibid., 4.)

silver.* Let *us*, then, also abide at home, as it were; let us not trust to strangers; let us not go beyond the rule of faith, handed down to us by the Church. This rule, laid down by Christ Himself, cannot raise any questions, unless it be on the part of the heretics, and to add to their number.† Let us be careful not to dispute or seek to deepen that rule, even by a profound examination of Holy Scripture, for this would be to pander to curiosity, which ought to be subordinate to faith, as the love of glory to salvation. "To know nothing beyond the law, is to know all things."‡

The question of the supreme authority of the Scriptures, as appealed to by the heretics in opposition to the faith of tradition, was still a grave one. Tertullian enters on it with much frankness, not shrinking from a rigid following out of its principles to their consequences. He is perfectly justified in objecting to his adversaries, that they play with those sacred books which they choose to use as a shield, for they reject in the most arbitrary manner all that they cannot make subservient to their purpose. Instead of invoking the principles of a sound criticism at once religious and scientific; Tertullian declares that the Scriptures may be made to yield anything they seek, and will accommodate them to every caprice of interpretation.§ They need, therefore, to be studied by the light of the sound doctrine contained in the rule of faith.‖ It was a strange depreciation of the Divine Book to assert that it

* "Intra tectum suum." ("De præscript.," 12.)
† Ibid., 13.
‡ "Adversus regulam nihil scire, omnia scire est." (Ibid., 14.)
§ Ibid., 39.
‖ "Ubi apparuerit esse veritatem disciplinæ et fidei christianæ illic, erit veritas scripturarum." (Ibid., 19.)

could not be understood by its own light; even when accepted in good faith in its general scope, in the spirit, and not in the dead letter. After all, was not the rule of faith, itself susceptible, like all human speech of various interpretations? If an external authority is required to fix the sense of the Scriptures, such an authority must be equally necessary for the tradition of the Church, and thus no solid basis is to be found anywhere.

Tertullian endeavours, by his theory of the apostolate, to make Jesus Christ Himself the founder of religious authority. He considers that Christ made the apostles, by a direct mandate, the infallible exponents of true doctrine. The apostles not only wrote books, but founded Churches. These are the sole depositaries of truth, and they constitute that Catholicity which is not bound by any outward organisation, but simply by brotherly love and by the unity of the faith, as derived from the rule of faith which is its invariable and universal expression.* Apostolic infallibility guaranteed by miracle,† is not impaired by any error of conduct like that which St. Paul charges against St. Peter in the city of Antioch, for such practical mistakes in no way affect the doctrine itself.‡ The language of the apostle of the Gentiles, when he commits the trust to Timothy,§ is a sure pledge of the transmission of the truth in the truly apostolic Churches, which are in a manner the mothers of all the rest.‖ The Holy Spirit, sent by Christ, preserved in

* "De præscript.," 20. † Ibid., 30. ‡ Ibid., 23. § Ibid., 25.
‖ "Ecclesiis apostolicis matricibus et originalibus fidei." (Ibid.) "Sine dubio tenentem quod Ecclesiæ ab apostolis, apostoli a Christo, Christus a Deo accepit." (Ibid., 21.)

its purity the teaching of the first witnesses of Christ.* If, then, we would possess the unadulterated truth, we must look to these Churches. Western Christianity has readiest access to the great Church of Rome, which has no other claim to preference but that of nearness, since it can glory in nothing over the Churches of the East, whose institution can in like manner be traced back to the apostles.† This is the sure method of arriving at infallible truth, and of discovering the true meaning of the Scriptures, while avoiding all disputation and dangerous questioning.

Let it not be presumed that this tradition may be insufficient, on the ground that Jesus Christ may not have revealed everything to His disciples, or that these may have kept to themselves some secret doctrine.‡ There is no such subterranean current of tradition; all is contained in the rule of faith. This is the truly venerable tradition; the good seed was sown before the tares; heresy may have made its way into the field, and scattered some germs of error, but it is not the first occupant, and its incursions are plainly foretold and strongly denounced by the apostles.§ The field belongs to the Churches founded by the first disciples of Christ, and to all those who, by consanguinity of doctrine, form one body with them.‖ Will the false teachers dare to oppose their prescriptions to ours? We are in all things their predecessors; they only come after us.¶

* "De præscript.," 28.

† "Si potes in Asiam tendere, habes Ephesum. Si autem Italiæ adjaces, habes Romam, unde nobis quoque auctoritas præsto est." (Ibid., 36.)

‡ Ibid., 22.

§ Ibid., 33.

‖ "Pro consanguinitate doctrinæ." (Ibid., 32.)

¶ "Posterior nostra res non est, imo omnibus prior est." (Ibid., 35.)

We hold our title direct from the apostles, who approve our doctrine as strongly as they condemn all that is opposed to it. Thus the judge that ends the strife is not the Divine Book, since that may be variously interpreted, and Christians ought not to allow heretics to appeal to this book in order to lead them into disputation. It is without the Scriptures that the Church convinces them they have no part nor lot in the matter; it takes its stand upon the authority of Jesus Christ, which is confounded with that of the apostles, and which is embodied in the common faith of the Churches founded by them. Thus it is justified in asking these intruders by what right they cut down its forests, destroy its canals, and move its landmarks. "This is my domain," the Church may say, "my ancient possession; my title is received from those to whom it first belonged. I am the inheritor of the apostles. I am in possession by their will and testament; I fulfil the testamentary conditions. As for you, they repudiated and branded you as strangers and enemies."* No proscription could be more clear and rigorous than this.

Let us endeavour to elicit from this remarkable treatise, which has exercised so great an influence on the formation of ecclesiastical authority, the points of doctrine clearly derivable from it. The final authority is not that of Holy Scripture, but the unanimous tradition of the Apostolic Churches, which is the authentic expression of the teaching of the apostles, epitomised in the rule of faith. That tradition is complete; there is nothing to be added to or taken from it. The Church

* "Extranei et inimici." ("De præscript.," 37.)

has, then, no commission to augment or to interpret this tradition, for it comes directly from Christ and His apostles. The Apostolic Churches have no superiority over the rest except as sources of information; they are in a manner the depositaries of the sacred archives, which are to be preserved by them intact and unalterable. It would be a grave error to compare the theory of Tertullian with the ecclesiastical system, which is not content with making the Church the depositary of the true apostolic doctrine, but which constitutes it an active authority, forming decisions on points of doctrine, and enforcing them by virtue of its official character. Tertullian holds that the primitive apostolate speaks by the Church, as it spoke when its representatives first preached the Gospel to the world. I know, indeed, that after he became a Montanist, he asserted the constant development of revelation and the continuity of inspiration. Those who condemned him profited nevertheless by his twofold error; they combined the two ideas which succeeded each other in his mind, though with him the second error cast out the first. The Church of later days accepted the authority of the rule of faith, but it also believed in its own inspired right to interpret, and soon began to add to it. The gravity of such a synthesis in the formation of a system of authority is at once evident. With regard to the constitution of the Church, Tertullian, even before his conversion to Montanism, taught nothing which could lend support to the hierarchical system. Catholicism, as he represents it, is a purely spiritual society, without any official bond of union. He never, like Irenæus, gave sanction to

the episcopal power, against which he subsequently launched such stern invectives. He nowhere gave any explanation of the manner in which the rule of faith was formed; he does not go beyond the historical claim established by the succession of the Apostolic Churches; he does not nominate any guardians of this tradition, which remains the real doctrinal power in the Church. Clearly this is an omission from the point of view he occupies; it needs the supplement already given by Irenæus, who saw in the episcopate the true apostolic succession. Tertullian is not influenced by any hierarchical tendency, but purely and simply by his desire to guard against the dangers of speculation, and to cut short the investigation of truth. Therefore he makes antiquity the final touchstone; this is confounded, in his view, with the true nature of things, which is to be found only in the origin of institutions. While we thus perceive the consequences which will follow from the principles he has laid down, it is not just to impute these directly to Tertullian, and we are bound to admit that in this problem of religious authority he remained steadily faithful to the essentially realistic tendency of his system. The manner, so strikingly individual and original, in which we shall find him interpreting the rule of faith, shows how impossible it is to suppose the acceptance as a whole of any body of orthodoxy whatever, for each ardent champion could not but set upon it the seal of his own individuality.

Let us speak first of that which is properly called the theology of Tertullian. We shall lay stress only on those points which bring into prominence his peculiar tenets. "The God whom we adore," he says, "is

one."* He has no equal, else there would be two absolute Beings, which is a contradiction, for the absolute is necessarily unique. If God is not the one God, He is no God. To suppose a second God is, then, to deny the Deity.† He is invisible, incomprehensible, above all understanding, except He reveal Himself.‡ He is eternal, having neither beginning nor end; He is also Almighty.§ He is supremely wise and sovereignly free.‖ Fearful above all things of losing the divine substance in pure idealism, Tertullian does not hesitate to admit that the invisible, ineffable God has a body. Pure spirit is to him a great void; the divine substance is the supreme reality. Therefore God, purely spiritual as He is, has a body which is, as it were, the form of His Spirit; hence man could be created in His likeness.¶ Goodness and justice are the moral attributes of the Deity, and should never be placed in opposition as an irreducible antithesis. God is essentially love or goodness. He manifests this goodness in all time, but always in harmony with reason, and on principles of justice. "Goodness precedes justice; the former is the very nature of God; severity is only occasionally manifested when evil has been done."** Goodness would cease to be goodness if it were wanting in justice. These two great attributes are manifested in

* "Apol.," 17.

† "Duo summa, quomodo consistent?" ("Adv. Marc.," i. 3.)

‡ "Apol.," 17.

§ "In æternitate constitutum, innatum." ("Adv. Marc.," i. 3.)

‖ "Adv. Marc.," iii. 5. "Nulla vis aderit illi." ("Adv. Hermog.," 17.)

¶ "Quis enim negabit Deum corpus esse?" ("Adv. Prax.," 7.)

** "Prior bonitas Dei secundum naturam, severitas posterior secundum causam." ("Adv. Marc.," ii. 11; comp. Ibid., i. 23.)

creation, for if the world was produced by goodness, it is governed and regulated by justice.* Tertullian perceives justice in the natural laws according to which light was separated from darkness, the earth from the heaven, the waters beneath from the waters above, and even in the distinction of the sexes. Justice thus finds its primary application in the physical world before it is realised in the sphere of morals. It assumes the form of wrath and punishment in view of sin.† This thought is very grand. God is love, but love is holy and condemns its opposite. There is no other way of reconciling justice and goodness, for so long as they are regarded as attributes in opposition, and, as it were, distinct entities, which must be treated as powers with differing interests, dualism is inevitable. The theologians of Alexandria had indeed affirmed the radical and essential unity of the two attributes, by saying that goodness is holy; but they had not sufficiently guaranteed the just claims of God. Tertullian was more exact on this point. Unhappily, he carried to too great a length the comparison between the justice of God and the anger of man, taking his stand on the analogy which ought to subsist between the image and its prototype. We resemble God not only in the rational part of our being, but also in the passions and affections. It is necessary that God should experience all the feelings which our acts are calculated to awaken—anger against the evil, bitterness towards the ungrateful, aversion from the proud; in a word, He must needs resent all wickedness on the

* "Omnia ut bonitas concepit, ita justitia distinxit." ("Adv. Marc.," ii. 12.) † "De anima," 16; "Adv. Marc.," i. 26.

same ground as He has pity on souls wandering in error, and takes pleasure in the good.* Tertullian is ever under the same fear of seeing feelings resolved into mere ideas. He imagines that the justice and severity of God have no reality, except as they resemble the passionate movements of our hearts.

In spite of his strong repugnance to metaphysics, he cannot evade them when he comes to treat of the most obscure point in the divine ontology—that grave problem of the Trinity, so much debated in his day, and which, in the absence of any official and authoritative theory, necessarily stimulated intellectual subtlety.† He had to harmonise the rule of faith, which was very positive as to the pre-existence and divinity of the Word, with the tenets of a positive monotheism, which was the imperious demand of the Christian conscience. The success of the unitarian monarchism of Praxeas was due to no other cause. In view of such a position, of the danger of which Tertullian was fully conscious, he did not have recourse to the convenient and summary process of prescription; he entered into discussion, and endeavoured to overcome error by acknowledging the element of truth that might be contained in it. If he did not discover the final solution, he at least helped to prepare the way for it, by his novel and suggestive treatment of the doctrine of the Trinity. He began by boldly asserting, as we have seen, the unity of God; the absolute is incompatible

* "Iram propter scelestos et bilem propter ingratos et æmulationem propter superbos." ("Adv. Marc.," ii. 16.)

† The whole Christology of Tertullian is found in his treatise "Adv. Praxeam," and "De carne Christi."

with duality. "He is alone," said Tertullian: "there is nothing beyond Him. Nevertheless, He was not absolutely alone; He had with Him and in Himself reason, for God is a God of reason; that which is in Him in the very first place is reason, which is the consciousness He has of Himself. We recognise in this reason the Logos of the Greeks."* It is not personal, however, and is distinguished from the Word properly so called, as in man thought precedes articulate speech. God is thus reason before He is the Word. The former is the substance of the latter, the hidden source whence it will spring. There is, moreover, identity of essence between the reason and the Word. "Even before God had given forth His Word, He had it in Himself, in His reason, for He thought and ordered in silence that which He would shortly utter by His Word."† These terms are clear. Tertullian does not recognise any more than Justin or Athenagoras the eternal and personal pre-existence of the Word. He regards it as existing before the creation only in the divine thought. Nay, more; this thought is not primarily the consciousness which God has of Himself; it is rather the eternal idea of creation, for as He has just told us, God thinks that which He is about to utter by His Word. Now, this divine utterance, replete with life, like all that proceeds from God, is the world, and chiefly that which

* "Ante omnia Deus erat solus, ne tunc quidem solus, habebat enim secum, quam habebat in semet ipso, rationem suam scilicet. Hunc Græci λόγον dicunt." ("Adv. Prax.," 5.)

† "Cum rationem competat antiquiorem haberi, quia non sermonalis a principio, sed rationalis Deus, etiam ante principium. Etsi Deus nondum sermonem suum miserat, proinde eum cum ipsa et in ipsa ratione intra semet ipsum habebat, tacite cogitando et disponendo secum quæ per sermonem mox erat dicturus." (Ibid.)

is the object and final end of creation — the moral creature, who for us, and in our sphere, is no other than man. The Word of God is not indeed to be confounded with the world. He is its Author, the organ of the creative power, a true divine person; but it is nevertheless true that He exists only in relation to the world and as the prototype of the moral creature. There is an evolution in the bosom of the Deity or of the absolute, but it is not designed solely for the full realisation of the Deity, if we may so express it. If God had remained alone, there would have been no necessity for it; it is an evolution called for only by the necessities of the creation. In other words, the Unity becomes the Trinity, only for the sake of the world. This is the great imperfection of the theology of Tertullian, as of most of his contemporaries. He has brought it out in full relief, so to speak, by the vigour of his language.

When God was about to produce the world, with all its categories of beings, he sent forth His Word. We recognise in this Word the wisdom of the Proverbs, which cries: "The Lord created me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old."* The inward Word has become the outward; it assumed its form and mode of life when God said, "Let there be light."† Such is the perfect nativity of the Word which proceeds from God. This Word, Tertullian calls the first-born

* "Ut primum Deus voluit ea quæ cum Sophiæ ratione et sermone disposuerat intra se, in substantius et species suas edere, ipsum primum protulit sermonem, ut per ipsum fierent universa." ("Adv. Prax.," 6.)

† "Tunc sermo speciem et ornatum suum, sumit, cum dicit Deus: fiat lux." (Ibid., 7.)

Son of God. He thus emerges from philosophical abstraction, and insists on the religious aspect of this grave and difficult problem. The Word proceeding from the Father was the first-born, only Son, He who alone was begotten of the Father, coming forth from His very heart. Nothing empty and unreal could emanate from God, as if He Himself could be assimilated to that which is unreal and empty. It follows that the Word is substantial like the Father, and that He shares in the divine reality, which is inseparable from corporeality.* This production of the Word may be fitly called His emanation, provided only that word be not used in the sense attached to it by the Valentinian heresy, which recognises the Æon as distinct from the principle whence it emanates, and as retaining only a feeble reflection of it.†

Tertullian, on the contrary, regards the Word as abiding in absolute union with the Father. He alone knows Him, reveals Him, and shows to us all that he has seen and heard with the Father. He is with the Father, for ever inseparable from Him. This is the true emanation. The Son emanates from the Father as the fruit from the root, the stream from the source, the ray from the sun.‡ It is in this sense we must recognise the divine duality. The root and the fruit are indeed two things, but closely united; we distinguish between the source and the stream, though they are indivisible. Thus the duality or triplicity of the Deity may be reached by the same process. "The eternal thought is in the Father; the Word expresses

* "Adv. Prax.," 7.

† Ibid., 8.

‡ "Protulit Deus sermonem sicut radix fruticem et fons fluvium et sol radium." (Ibid.)

it in creation, and the Spirit brings all to perfection. The Spirit emanates from the Spirit. God emanates from God, as light from light. That which comes forth from God is God, or the Son of God, and the two are one."* The Divine Being is not multiple in His essence, but in His mode of action: He comprehends not several conditions, but several degrees.† After the sun we have the ray, and after the ray, the reflection; so after the Father we have the Son, and after the Son, the Holy Spirit; but the same attributes belong to the three persons.

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is not clearly stated by Tertullian. It is certain that he recognises His personality, as well as that of the Word; but that personality has also a beginning. The Spirit is not distinguished from the Word until the ascension, as the Word itself was not distinguished from the Father until creation. The Son, in returning to heaven, gives the Spirit to the Church as the third name in the Godhead.‡ Thus the Trinity descends from the Father by degrees, following each other in close and necessary sequence, without at all infringing on the divine monarchy.§ Tertullian calls it the *economic*, that is to say, the

* "Ita de Spiritu Spiritus et de Deo Deus. Quod de Deo perfectum est, Deus est et Dei Filius et unus ambo." ("Apol.," 21.)

† "Alterum non numero, gradu." (Ibid.)

‡ "Paracletum a Patre se postulaturum cum ascendisset ad Patrem, et missurum repromittit, et quidem alium. ("Adv. Prax.," 25.) Spiritum sanctum tertium nomen divinitatis effudit." (Ibid., 30.) See Reville (articles before quoted). See also the observations on the original identity of the Word and the Spirit in the treatise "Adv. Hermog.," iv., where the Spirit, like the impersonal Word, bears the name *Wisdom*. "Spiritus sermoni inerat." ("Adv. Prax.," 7.)

§ "Ita trinitas per consertos et connexos gradus a patre decur-

successive, Trinity; like the Jewish and Christian economies, which were, in a manner, the movement or evolution upon earth of the divine thought. The evolution is, in this case, transferred to the celestial sphere. It is impossible to maintain the eternity of the Trinity on such a conception of it. "There was a time," says Tertullian, plainly, "when the Son was not."*

From this principle two results follow: the identity of nature, but the marked subordination of the Son and Spirit in relation to the Father. "The Father is the totality of substance; the Son has a derived and limited existence, as He declared when he said: 'The Father is greater than I.' The Father is not confounded with the Son, for he is the greater. He who begets and He who is begotten, are not one and the same, nor is He who is sent identical with Him who sends Him."† The same subordination is manifest in the relation of the Holy Spirit to the Son and to the Father. There is no possibility on this system of merging all the Divine persons in one, as though the Son was only another name for the Father. No; the Father is the Father only because He has the Son. This distinction of the persons detracts nothing from the divinity of the Son; we call Him God, as we call the ray sunlight. It is by means of this subordination that the divine has been able to descend from its transcendental height. The

rens et monarchiæ nihil obstrepit, et *οἰκονομίας* statum protegit." ("Adv. Prax.," 8.)

* "Fuit tempus cum ei Filius non fuit." ("Adv. Hermog.," 3.)

† "Pater tota substantia est, Filius vero derivatio totius et portio. Pater Filio major." ("Adv. Prax.," 7.)

Father is invisible because of the glory of His Majesty; He could not manifest Himself directly, nor humble Himself to our low estate. The Son is the Divine made accessible, the God who may be heard and seen, the God who can stoop, because He is not the absolute but the derived divinity.* He is like the ray which our eyes can look upon without pain, while gazing upon the sun they would be blinded by excessive brightness. We can endure the light in a softened and diminished lustre; we could not bear it in its full shining. Again, the Father is impassible; the Son alone was able to take upon Himself the sufferings by which our redemption was to be wrought. While the stream remains calm at the source, it is troubled as it flows along; it is the same water still, but under different conditions.† Thus subordination is the necessary condition of revelation. The Word had already manifested Himself in angelic form under the Old Covenant; these preliminary incarnations foreshadowed and prepared the way for the crowning condescension, when the Lord became the babe of Bethlehem.‡ It is the Son who comes down to our earth, who asks questions, who makes vows. Thus the notion of the absolute, that which Tertullian calls the philosophical idea of God, remains intact. All that is incompatible with it is assigned to the Son, who had power to take upon Him our humanity, and in human form to suffer shame and the cross.§

The conception of the incarnation does not present any difficulty to him as regards the divine ontology, for

* "Invisibilem Patrem intelligamus pro plenitudine majestatis; visibilem vero Filium agnoscamus pro modulo derivationis." ("Adv. Prax.," 14.) † Ibid., 29. ‡ Ibid., 16.
§ "Adv. Marc., ii. 27."

there is a natural relation between man and the Word. The Word is not only the principle, but the type of humanity. The terrestrial creation sighs after man as its consummation. Itself the work of the Word, called by Him out of nothing, its purpose is to show forth the majesty of the divine glory.* Matter cannot be eternal, else it would be possessed of an essential attribute of the Godhead.† It cannot have come forth from the bosom of God, or the indivisible would have been divided.‡ To suppose that creation was a necessity, would be to limit the absolute, and to impugn His independence.§ In support of the contrary theory, some urge the existence of evil which is ascribed to matter, but evil is virtually vindicated if it is made eternal as God Himself, and imputed to Him as a condition of being, determined by His own will.‖ The object of creation is the glory of God, which can, however, never be realised apart from goodness, the essential attribute of the Deity. The moral creature is the crown of the work.

The apex of being is not occupied by angels, for angels have not received the Spirit of God as man has; they are like flames of fire.¶ By a singular contradiction they are yet supposed to enjoy freedom of choice, since the fall of the demons is laid entirely to their own charge.** The part taken by Satan in the fall of man is important; he led man away after him,

* "Totam molem istam de nihilo expressit, in ornamentum majestatis suæ." ("Apol.," 17.)

† "Adv. Hermog.," 4.

‡ Ibid., 2. § Ibid., 9. ‖ Ibid., 10.

¶ Afflatus Dei, generosior spiritu materiali quo angeli constiterunt." ("Adv. Marc.," ii. 8.) ** "Apol.," 22.

and frustrated the lofty purposes of his creation.* No higher destiny could be conceived than that for which man was formed. He was made both body and soul in the very image of the Word, and as though in view of the incarnation. The Creator, foreseeing that His Son would become man, said, "Let us make man in our own image."† Man is at once soul and body;‡ while, at the same time, there is a clear distinction between the two portions of his being, since his soul has a body of its own, which shares in the conditions of matter, is susceptible, that is, of suffering and joy;§ it is fed, and grows to a greater or less stature.‖ The soul is indivisible and immortal.¶ The flesh is not in itself evil; it was moulded by the hand of God to be in after times the temple of His Word.** The Divine Phidias therein enshrined the soul as an inestimable jewel;†† the flesh serves as the instrument of its immortal guest; it is designed, therefore, to share its destinies. Hence the necessity of the resurrection resting on a twofold basis. First, divine justice cannot leave the flesh unpunished after it has been the handmaid of both good and evil during the earthly life.‡‡ In the

* "Diabolus ipse sese fecerit, deferendo de Deo." ("Adv. Marc.," ii. 10.)

† "Ille enim Christum, sermonem suum, intuens hominem futurum: faciamus, inquit, hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram." (Ibid., v. 8.)

‡ "Hic erit homo interior, alius exterior, dupliciter unus." ("De anima," 9.)

§ "Incorporalitas nihil patitur." ("De anima," 7; "De resurrect. carnis," 17.) ‖ "De anima," chaps. 36-39. ¶ Ibid., 14.

** "Ita limus ille jam tum imaginem induens Christi futuri in carne, non tantum Dei opus erat, sed et pignus." ("De resurrect. carnis," 6.) †† "Phidias tantus, Deus vivus." (Ibid., 6.)

‡‡ "Qualis vixerit, talem judicari, quia de eo, quod vixerit, habeat judicari." (Ibid., 14.)

second place, the infinite mercy seeks to accomplish a complete salvation, and to restore the first Adam in his entire nature, to the image of the second Adam who is risen from the dead.*

The soul bears the image of God: this image, which constitutes its intellectual and moral life, is designed to reach a perfect resemblance.† Tertullian rejects the famous trilogy of the Platonist psychology, which divided the soul into three parts — *reason*, *desire*, and *anger*, on the ground that reason reigned alone in the primeval soul; desire and anger were the offspring of sin, which had, at first, no existence.‡ The soul is active in the formation, both of ideas and of sensations.§ It has not descended to earth from a higher world, having already passed through various modes of existence.‖ Metempsychosis is contradicted by facts. Do we not observe a great diversity in the men composing successive generations? Conscience cannot acquiesce in a divine sentence executed upon a being different from him who has sinned. Besides, the hypothesis has no foundation, since our memory cannot go back beyond the present life. Moral liberty is the appanage of man as of all the higher creatures.¶ The law given to him laid upon him no necessity to evil; it merely gave the occasion for his will to declare itself on the one side or the other. It was only by free choice

* "Resurgit igitur caro per Jesum Christum, qui et homini Deum et hominem Deo reddet, carni Spiritum et Spiritui carnem . . . rursus præsentetur Adam auditurus a Domino: ecce Adam quasi unus ex nobis factus est." ("De resurrect. carnis," 63.)

† "Neque enim facie et corporalibus lineis ad uniformem Deum expressus est sed in ea substantia, quam ab ipso Deo traxit, id est anima." ("Adv. Marc.," ii. 5.)

‡ "De anima," 16.

§ Ibid., 17, 18.

‖ Ibid., 28-36.

¶ "Adv. Marc.," ii. 4.

that he could rise to the goodness which was not natural to him as to God.* This freedom, which is a gift of God, is always strengthened and sustained by Him. Grace is an abiding power of the spiritual order; it triumphs over nature.† The Fall must be ascribed to an estranged and rebellious will.‡ Though it leads to perdition, it has not, nevertheless, absolutely perverted our being, "for the divine element within us is rather obscured than extinguished."§ Nature, corrupted as it is, still reflects the divine. Original sin is transmitted by generation, for the soul is generated with the body, and grows with it, the father transmitting all the good and evil germs which are in him.‖ Death is the meed of rebellion, and passes upon the whole race.¶

This anthropology, which has some grand aspects, might have led Tertullian to a very broad conception of the incarnation, and he would thus have avoided the trenchant dualism of the two natures in Jesus Christ. If man is really created in the image of the Word, human nature will reach the full realisation of its idea, or of its ideal, in the earthly manifestation of its prototype. It is strange to find Tertullian less advanced and enlightened upon this essential point than Irenæus. His treatise "On the Body of Christ" is devoted

* "Bonus natura Deus solus. Ut ergo bonum jam suum haberit homo, de institutione adscripta est illi libertas et potestas arbitrii, ut ita demum bonus consisteret homo, si ex voluntate jam bonus inveneretur." ("Adv. Marc.," ii. 6.)

† "Hæc erit vis divinæ gratiæ, potentior utique natura, habens in nobis subjacentem sibi liberam arbitrii potestatem." ("De anima," 21.)

‡ "Adv. Marc.," ii. 8.

§ "Quod enim a Deo est, non tam exstinguitur, quam obumbratur. In pessimis aliquid boni." ("De anima," 4.)

‖ Ibid., 27.

¶ Ibid., 50.

entirely to the incarnation. After establishing the possibility of miracle, on the ground of the Almighty power of God, which has no other limitation than His will,* he shows eloquently that the dignity of the Most High is not compromised by such a condescension. Love finds therein its highest glory. Yes, the Christ truly loved that insignificant being whose origin is so humble.† For him He came down from heaven, for him He abased Himself unto death, even the death of the cross. His love may be measured by the price He gave for our ransom. This is the divine folly which confounds human wisdom—God, born of a virgin, in human flesh, and taking upon Himself in a manner the degradation of our nature. If the death of the Redeemer was necessary to our salvation, He must needs be born in order to die. Let us not quibble with the heretics about the body of Christ. It is not composed of a subtle essence taken from the stars. What is gained by the Gnostic view of creation, in which it is all regarded as the work of a fallen Æon, and may be fitly characterised in a word as the sin of a god?‡ Neither is the body of Christ of angelic substance. "It was man who had fallen, man who was to be restored."§ Equally erroneous is it to regard the flesh of the Redeemer as the soul taking a visible form, for in that case He would not be one like unto us, and could not be our Saviour. Lastly, His soul, like every other being, had its own body, which may not be

* "Deo nihil impossibile, nisi quod non vult." ("De carne Christi," 3.)

† "Certe Christus dilexit illum in immunditiis. Amavit utique quem magno redemit." (Ibid., 4.)

‡ Ibid., 8.

§ "Homo pericrat, hominem restitui oportuerat." (Ibid., 14,)

confounded with the flesh. Let us hold fast to the simplicity, and what might be called the good faith of the language. It is our very flesh which the Son of God assumed.* Every objection disappears so soon as it is admitted that the human body is not by nature defiled, but that it becomes so by an act of the will. Sin is in the flesh, but the flesh is not sin; the original substance is pure; it is polluted only by the commission of sin. Now, it is this original substance which Christ assumed and carried up into heaven.† He took it complete and virginal as it was in Adam. It was a real body, for it came forth from the womb of a daughter of men, the second Eve, but it was kept perfectly pure by virtue of the miraculous conception. Thus was broken the chain of sinful generation, and a new and divine commencement was made. "It was meet that He who was to introduce here on earth a new birth, should Himself be born by a new mode.‡ It was not fit that the Son of God should be born of the seed of man, for He would then have been entirely a son of man. He would not have been the Son of God at all, nor would He have been greater than Solomon or Jonah. Ebion would then be justified.§ The divine germ was to be substituted for the human seed; man has become one with God by the union of the human flesh with the Spirit of God."‖ His birth took place in conformity with natural laws. Mary did not preserve eternal virginity."¶

* "De carne Christi," 13. † Ibid., 16.
‡ "Nove nasci debebat novæ nativitatis dedicator." (Ibid., 17.)
§ Ibid., 18.
‖ "Sic denique homo cum Deo, dum caro hominis cum Spiritu Dei." (Ibid., 18.) ¶ Ibid., 20-23.

The incarnation, real as it is, does not in any way impair the divinity of the Redeemer; for it is the peculiar character of the Divine nature to abide unchanged in the midst of changing circumstances.* And yet Tertullian had established that the nature of the Word is distinct from that of the Father in this very respect—that it can emerge from the immutable absolute. The human and the divine in Jesus are rather in juxtaposition than united and blended. While the God remains impassible, the man is liable to legal defilements.† "The divine ray having entered the womb of a virgin, takes the form of flesh: thus is born the man who is one with God. This flesh, informed by the Spirit, is fed, grows, speaks, eats, and acts; it is our Christ."‡ These expressions imply an irreducible duality, which comes out still more clearly from the treatise against Praxeas. The divine immutability is again expressed in all its severity. The Word undergoes no change; He can be no other than God, as the flesh cannot cease to be human. "Thus we have two natures, not confounded, but united in the single person of Jesus."§ The peculiar character of these two natures undergoes no change, for the Spirit accomplishes the works which belong to Him, namely, miracles; while the flesh submits to all

* "Id est, ut Deus et in omnia converti possit et qualis est perseverare." ("De carne Christi," 3.)

† "Tetigit leprosum, a quo etsi homo inquinari potuisset, Deus utique non inquinaretur, incontaminabilis scilicet." ("Adv. Marc.," iv. 9.)

‡ "Iste igitur Dei radius, delapsus in virginem quamdam, et in utero ejus caro figuratus, nascitur homo Deo mixtus." ("Apol.," 21.)

§ "Videmus duplicem statum, non confusum, sed conjunctum in una persona Deum et hominem Jesum." ("Adv. Prax.," 27.)

the sufferings which are its due. "Jesus is then man by the flesh, God by the Spirit. In His humanity He died, while He remains by the Spirit the Word and the Son of God."* It follows from these explicit terms that the humanity of Jesus consists essentially only in His flesh, that it is entirely passive. We are thus led into a new form of docetism, which gravely affects the work of redemption. Tertullian speaks indeed elsewhere of the soul of Jesus, which bowed beneath the weight of anguish, and uttered the cry of desolation on the cross; but the active part of His being is nevertheless the Spirit of the Word, from which He must needs part before He could die. "He united in Himself man and God, showing Himself God in His power, a man in weakness, giving to man all that is separable from His Godhead."† Unquestionably Tertullian remains a dualist. We lose altogether the notion of a humanity created in the image of God, and formed to bear His perfect resemblance. This is one of the gravest imperfections of his system.

The work of redemption is affirmed rather than defined by him. He attaches great importance to the death and resurrection of Jesus; he speaks the language of St. Paul, like all the Fathers, but his words convey no clear idea. The notion of expiation, strictly speaking, nowhere appears. He insists very strongly upon the necessity that Christ should come to earth in shame and sorrow before He comes in glory to reign. He compares Him to the accursed goat slain

* "Adv. Prax.," 27.

† "Miscente in semet ipso hominem et Deum, in virtutibus Deum, in pusillitatibus hominem." ("Adv. Marc.," ii. 27. See M. Réville (article quoted), p. 126.)

without the camp, and to the goat of expiation, whose blood flowed upon the altar for the sins of the people.* This blood which redeems us is the blood of the spotless Lamb, the blood even of a God.† Nothing can be more explicit than this language; yet closely pressed, it yields only vagueness and uncertainty. The cross doubtless occupies the central place in religious history; it is the foundation of the Gospel and of our salvation.‡ It fulfils all the prophecies and types of the Old Testament, from the sacrifice of Isaac to the extended hands of Moses interceding for his people, which prefigure the nailed hands of the victim of Calvary. The cross was that power which lifts humanity to heaven like the horns of the bull, to which Joseph, that other type of Christ, has been compared. It was a victory over the demon, and like the serpent of brass, it heals the soul which beholds it by faith of the bites of the diabolical serpent.§ Death as well as sin was vanquished on Calvary. ‖ The government was laid upon the shoulder of Jesus on the very day when He bowed Himself to death upon the accursed tree. The resurrection was the manifestation of His triumph.

If we ask wherein consisted this triumph over death and the demon, we find it is reduced to the idea of a holy act, a sacrifice of perfect obedience, which is set before us as a model, and which we may copy by the aid of Divine grace. Thus, and in no other way, are we redeemed from sin. "Let us ask of God that He

* "Adv. Marc.," iii. 7.

† "De pudicitia," 6.

‡ "Mors Christi summum fundamentum Evangelii." ("Adv. Marc.," iii. 8.)

§ Ibid., iii., 18.

‖ "Superata morte a passione ligni, Christus regnavit." (Ibid., iii. 19.)

will grant us to know and do His will, that we may be saved both in heaven and upon earth. That Divine will was accomplished by the Saviour in His preaching, in His works, and in His sufferings. Clearly, He did in all things the will of the Father, and He has thus left us an example that we also preach, work, and suffer, even unto death." * Jesus is thus a revealer and reformer rather than a Saviour.

There is nothing peculiar and positive in the work of Calvary. We also may offer a redeeming sacrifice for sin. Martyrdom is a continuation in a lower degree of the same sacrifice: it has an expiatory value for him who suffers it.† The merit of works is the logical consequence of such a theory. Faith, by the difficulties which it presents to our mind, vindicates for itself a place in the category of meritorious works.‡ The prayer of a pure heart, crowned by love and accompanied by the sacred incense of Christian virtues, is the acceptable sacrifice to God presented upon the spiritual altar.§ By it we satisfy Divine justice. Repentance and fasting possess expiatory virtue.‖ Expiation, in a word, is simply reparation. It is enough that good works take the place of evil. On such a conception of salvation, the difference between the Old

* "Est et illa Dei voluntas, quam Dominus administravit prædicando, operando, sustinendo. Sine dubio, quæ faciebat, ea erat voluntas patris, ad quæ nunc nos velut ad exemplaria provocamur." ("De orat.," 4.)

† "Lavacrum sanguinis securum." ("Contra gnostic. scorpiac.," 6.)

‡ "Ut fides, non mediocri præmio destinata, difficultate constaret." ("Apol.," 21.)

§ "De orat.," 23.

‖ "Patientia satis Deo fecit ("De patientia," 13). Quis dubitavit, ut homo per eamdem materiam causæ satis Deo faciat, per quam offenderat. . . . Primordiale delictum expiaretur." ("De jejun.," 3.)

and New Testament is completely effaced; we have in the latter a simple development of the doctrine of the former; the Gospel is only the Law amplified and spiritualised. The old institutions are abolished like circumcision, or completed like the law, or accomplished like prophecy, or consummated like faith.* The Sermon on the Mount is the supplement of the ancient discipline. The Gospel precepts are the abundant harvest yielded by the seed deposited by Mosaism.† The Old Testament, represented exclusively as a law, loses its highest character as a preparation for redemption. Sacrifice has no relation to the offering of Calvary; it is only the palpable form under which holiness must needs be presented to a carnally-minded people.‡

These important restrictions of the redemptive work explain the exaggerated estimate of authority entertained by Tertullian. The man who is but imperfectly saved is but half set free. Hence also springs that inordinate asceticism, which at once assumes a meritorious character, and gives a false tone to the morality of Tertullian, especially after he became a Montanist. Repentance is transformed into penance; tears purify the soul; public confession, made in sackcloth and ashes, extinguishes the fire of Gehenna in the heart.§ We give satisfaction to the justice of God by afflicting our flesh and spirit.‖ From the same fundamental error proceeds the sacramental materialism which

* "De orat.," 1.

† "Hæc Christus adjecerit ut supplementa consentanea disciplinæ creatoris." ("Adv. Marc.," iv. 16.)

‡ Ibid., ii. 18.

§ "De pœnitentia," 12.

‖ "De pristinis satisfacimus conflictatione carnis et Spiritus." ("De baptismo," 20.)

was connected also with Tertullian's ideas of the corporeality of the soul. A magical virtue is attributed to the baptismal water. The Holy Spirit moved over the confused waters of chaos; some particles of Divine influence are still retained by the element which received so great an honour.* The power of the demons has often made water an injurious instrument.† What ground is there then to question that the Divine influence may make itself felt through the same medium in an opposite direction? A truly sanctifying virtue is conferred on the baptismal water after the invocation of the officiator, and is communicated to the neophyte who has received the imposition of hands.‡ Christian baptism, which differs by its efficacy from the rite practised by John the Baptist, was only instituted after the completion of the work of Christ. It is necessary to salvation, unless its omission be supplied by martyrdom.§ Tertullian admits that any Christian has the right to administer baptism,‖ and he wishes it to be deferred in the case of little children, who, not as yet knowing Jesus Christ, cannot fulfil the spiritual conditions required to give full efficacy to the sacramental grace.¶

With regard to the Lord's Supper, he is much more moderate. His views are clear and positive that it is only a symbol of the broken body of Christ; and he does not even hint at its possessing any magical

* "De baptismo," 4. † Ibid., 5.

‡ "Sanctissimus Spiritus super baptismi aquas tanquam pristinam sedem recognoscens conquiescit." (Ibid., 8. Comp. 5.)

§ "Præscribitur nemini sine baptismo competere salutem." (Ibid., 12, 16.) ‖ "Laïcis just est." (Ibid.)

¶ "Cunctatio baptismi utilior est, præcipue tamen circa parvulos." (Ibid., 18.)

virtue.* We cannot hope to find in his doctrine of the final issues of the world's history more spirituality than in that of Irenæus. He insists strongly upon the resurrection of the flesh in the special treatise he has devoted to that subject, and this he accepts in the most material sense, though he looks for a glorious transfiguration.† All nature will have its palingenesis. The soul awaits the final consummation in an intermediate state, which is neither earth nor heaven, but the preparation for future glory.‡ The millennium is the restoration of the reign of Christ upon earth. All the apocalyptic images are taken in a literal sense. Jesus will come again to judge the world. He will send the wicked to eternal punishment, and consume by fire the heavens and the earth that now are. From the ashes will arise a new and purified nature, and the Son will restore the kingdom to His Father.§

Such is this system, marked from beginning to end by a character of narrowness and realism, but illuminated by splendid flashes of genius and eloquence. It was destined to exert a considerable influence on

* The leading passage on this point is found in "Contra Marc.," iv. 40: "Acceptum panem et distributum discipulis corpus suum illum fecit, hoc est *corpus meum* dicendo, id est figura corporis mei. Figura autem non fuisset nisi veritas esset corpus." (After having taken the bread and distributed it to His disciples, He made it His body—that is, He said, "This is my body," signifying *the figure of my body*. But there would be no figure if His body itself had not been a reality.) It is evident, in spite of interpretations to the contrary (see Mœhler, "Patrology," vii. pp. 584, 585), that Tertullian simply affirms in this passage the reality of the body of Christ, of which the eucharistic bread is merely a figure.

† "De resurrect. carnis," 57.

‡ "De anima," 55-58. "The soul passes through no other suffering than that of awaiting the resurrection" (chap. 58). This presents no analogy to expiation.

§ "De spectac.," 30; "De resurrect. carnis," 63.

Christian thought, alike by its imperfections and its nobler features.

§ II. *Cyprian.*

Tertullian owes in large measure the permanence and extent of his influence to the wise moderation of his disciple Cyprian, who served him no less by his modifications of the master's doctrine, than by the lucid and softened form in which he presented it as a whole. The boiling torrent subsides in his writings into a river flowing through a channel broad and deep. Cyprian adds nothing to the theology of Tertullian; he guides it into no new course; but he carefully guards and moderates the fresh current of thought just opened by an impetuous and original mind. On one point alone—his view of the Church—has he supplemented or given a defined form to the teaching of the master. It is needless then for us to dwell here upon the dogmatic portion of his work, since it presents nothing original, but only develops in strains of calm and noble eloquence the thoughts of his illustrious predecessor.

These Cyprian reproduces in his theology, avoiding as far as possible the use of rigid formularies. He quotes the principal texts of the Old Testament by which Tertullian established that the Word was the Wisdom of the Book of Proverbs, produced by God before any of His works.* It is probable therefore that he also held that the Word had a beginning, and that the eternal thought of God only became a distinct person

* Cyprian, "Testim. contra Judæos," ii. 1.

at the creation. He does not enlarge upon the perfect divinity of Christ, in whom he recognised and adored the God-Man, without defining the relation of the two natures.* He is not more explicit than Tertullian as to the work of salvation; he affirms rather than expounds it. It is in his representation not so much a redemption, as deliverance from death and succour against sin; though he also uses the apostolic language, and speaks of our redemption by the blood of Christ.† But it is a redemption which has in it nothing absolute and incommunicable, since it is to be supplemented by our works, especially by almsgiving and martyrdom, the latter possessing a purifying virtue. The Jewish religion would have been final if the obligations which it imposed on its adherents had been observed by them. The Jews lost their privilege by their pride and disobedience.‡ Jesus Christ came then only because the work of Moses had failed. The difference between the two Testaments is not really maintained on such a conception of the Gospel. A return to the institutions of the Old Testament is but one step further. The hierarchical theocracy exists in germ in such a doctrine. "The Word of God, who is also His wisdom, His power, and glory, came to be the revealer and the teacher of the human race, according to the oracles of the prophets. He stoops to enter the womb of a virgin, and the Holy Spirit assumes human flesh."§ These

* Cyprian, "Testim. contra Judæos.," ii. 6-10.

† "Per sanguinem Domini redempti sumus." ("De habitu virg.," 2.)

‡ "Judæis primum erat apud Deum gratia sed illi negligentes disciplinæ dum divina præcepta contemnunt, datam sibi gratiam perdiderunt." ("De idol. vanit.," 10.)

§ "Gratiæ arbiter et magister sermo et Filius Dei mittitur qui

expressions indicate a very vague conception of the Trinity, since the third person seems to be confounded with the second. "God joins Himself to man: it is our God, our Christ, who took on Him humanity to bring it back to the Father."* "Christ was pleased to be what man is, that man might be what Christ is." After casting out the demons by His word, healing the paralytics, cleansing the lepers, raising the dead, commanding the elements, and compelling the winds and the sea to obey Him, He was crucified by the Jews. "The prophets had foretold this fact as necessary, not simply in order that He might be acquainted with death, but that He might conquer it; and that, reascending into heaven after His passion, He might manifest His divine power. After having of His own free will given up the spirit which was in Him, thus anticipating the deed of His executioners, He rose again the third day. He was then received up by a cloud into heaven, that by His victory He might raise to the right hand of His Father that humanity which He had loved, taken upon Himself, and saved from death. The disciples whom He left spread abroad His precepts for the salvation of the world, and to dispel the darkness of error by the light of truth."† Victory over death, the manifestation of His power, the enlightenment of the minds of men,—this is in brief the work of redemption. Cyprian says elsewhere that the Lord alone can pardon sins because He has borne them upon Him, because He was delivered by God for those sins,

per prophetas omnes retro illuminator et doctor humani generis prædicabatur. Carnem Spiritus sanctus induitur, Deus cum homine miscetur." ("De idol. vanit.," 11.)

* Ibid. † Ibid., 13-15.

and suffered for us. But this is only the repetition of a text of which he has not apprehended the true meaning, as is shown by the words which follow this declaration: "The merits of the martyrs and the works of the saints are of great weight with the Judge."* The treatise on "Good Works and Almsgiving" develops the principle of meritorious works; they are clearly described as means of propitiation, expiating our sins.† Jesus can then be said to have borne our burden only in a very limited sense. He did not so much repair the wrong, as to take upon Himself the consequences of evil, and His death is a triumph, not an expiation. Doubtless the result of this victory is permanent gain to us; it procures us the succour of His grace and the perpetual presence of His love by which He dwells in His Church. He is indeed the liberator, but He is not in the complete sense the Redeemer. Hence Christian morality loses its sublime simplicity. It is a scale of merits, carefully graduated, instead of being the appropriation of the work of Calvary accomplished once for all to cover all our sins. The highest steps of this ladder rise above the level of virtue obligatory on all. Martyrdom, though it may be demanded of all Christians should the occasion arise, raises to peerless honour those who endure it; but virginity, which cannot be made incumbent on all believers, is a counsel of perfection, which all should follow who desire to belong to the elect among the saints.‡

* "Credimus quidem posse apud judicem plurimum martyrum *merita* et opera justorum." ("De lapsis," 17.)

† "Magisteria divina docuerunt operationibus justis Deo satisfieri, misericordiæ meritis peccata purgari." ("De operis et eleemosyna," 5.)

‡ "De habitu virg.," 21.

Cyprian believed of necessity in sacramental efficacy, the virtue of which increases in the exact ratio of the depreciation of the work of redemption. He is satisfied however to see in the Holy Communion a type of the mystical union of Christians with a crucified Saviour,* though he seems sometimes to attribute magical virtue to the elements, and regards the eucharist as the sacrifice which the Church offers to God.† He accepts Tertullian's idea of baptism, ascribing to it a regenerative power.‡ It is in his idea of the Church we trace the most unhappy consequences of his general doctrine. He identifies absolutely the outward with the inward and spiritual fact, confounding the visible and invisible, and making unity the essential character of the religious society, so that no holiness can exist outside its limits. That which within its sacred shadow is holy, becomes elsewhere a sin.§ The episcopate is the only continuation of the apostolate; it takes the place of the priesthood of the Old Testament, as the

* On the one hand, Cyprian says that by the Holy Communion we are strengthened by the body and blood of Christ: "Non inermes protectione sanguinis et corporis Christi muniamus quos excitamus ad prælium." ("Epist.," 57, 2.) On the other hand, in his letter 73, he declares that it is the wine which is offered to God in the eucharist ("Epist.," 73, 13), and that the water mixed with it represents the people of God. This passage determines the representative and typical value of the eucharist: *Videmus in aqua populum intelligi.* The sacrament represents the union of Christian people with Christ in the Supper. Now, as it is not possible to suppose a transubstantiation of the water into the corporeal reality of the Church, so must we set aside any such idea in connection with the wine, which is only the emblem of the blood of Jesus Christ.

† Cyprian calls it the Holy Supper (*Oblatio, sacrificium*), and speaks of the altar. ("Epist.," i. 1, 2; 12, 2.)

‡ "Per baptisma Spiritus Sanctus accipitur." (Ibid., 73, 8.)

§ "Adulterari non potest sponsa Christi. Quisque ab Ecclesia segregatur adulteræ jungitur." ("De unitate Eccles.," 6.)

pillar of the spiritual building.* To divide the Church is to rend the robe of Christ; excommunication should be the doom of all schismatics.† The hierarchical system is not yet complete, more than one link is wanting to the chain. The primacy of Peter and that of the bishop of Rome are alike denied.‡ With the latter Cyprian enters unhesitatingly into controversy.§ The laity are not deprived of their ancient rights; they have a voice in the chapter in the government of religious matters.‖ The Church is not a monarchy, it is an episcopal senate. It is nevertheless true that the wall of separation between the people of God and the priesthood has been rebuilt. How could it be otherwise, when the redemptive efficacy of the sacrifice of Calvary is depreciated as it is by Cyprian? We must recognise that all has been accomplished on the cross, before the veil can be rent from top to bottom, and the way of access into the holiest laid open to the whole people of God. The bondage of the Church, about to become so grievous in the following age, was thus prepared by the deviations of her teachers from the true doctrine of redemption; and through the might of Tertullian's eloquence, and the high and legitimate influence of

* "De unitate Eccles.," 4.

† "Apostolis, id est episcopos." ("Epist.," 3, 3.) "Episcopatus unus est, Ecclesia quoque una est." ("De unit. Eccles.," 5.) The episcopate is a new priesthood: *Sacerdotalis auctoritas.* ("Epist.," 69, 7.)

‡ "Quando tunica Christi non dividitur." ("De unit. Eccles.," 17, 18.)

§ "Hoc erant utique et cæteri apostoli quod fuit Petrus." (Ibid., 4.)

‖ "A primordio episcopatus mei statuerim nihil sine concilio vestro et sine consensu plebis mea privatim sententia gerere." ("Epist.," 14, 4.)

Cyprian, it was at Carthage that these deviations acquired the gravest influence. The doctrine of final issues differs in the writings of Cyprian from that of his predecessors upon one important point. He rejects the idea of an intermediate state between death and judgment. According to him, the irrevocable sentence is passed upon every soul as it quits the earthly life, a fact which will not however interfere with the universal judgment on the great resurrection day.*

* "Ad Demetrionum," 26.

CONCLUSION.

At the close of this exposition of the theology of the second and third centuries, let us cast a rapid glance over the ground traversed, not indeed with any view to a chimerical synthesis, for it is not possible to comprehend in one line of view schools which differ so widely, and which, though they all rest on the same basis of faith, are too rich in original ideas to be constrained into uniformity. It is just this fertile variety which enables contemporary theology to make such large use of the ante-Nicene Fathers. On more than one important point they have been, not surpassed, but forgotten; everything contained in their teaching which was not in accordance with the official *credo* of the age of authority was at one time eliminated. Such of their views as militated against the received orthodoxy of the Church had become null and void in the fourth and fifth centuries; but they are brought out again to the light by the fuller development of religious thought which characterises our own day. My design, in these concluding remarks, is not to present a broad picture of the whole theological movement of primitive Christianity, for a field of history so wide and various cannot be thus comprehensively treated; but merely to disinter the nuggets of pure gold which have been left buried, not because they were so largely mingled with alloy as

to be scarcely discernible, but because of their very purity.

We have seen theology properly so called originating with the Greco-Asiatic school, of which Justin Martyr was the head or the initiator; then developing itself with incomparable breadth at Alexandria, through the subtle and brilliant genius of Clement and the dialectic power of Origen, who formed the first complete system. St. Hippolytus represents at Rome the Oriental school with all its greatness and all its defects. Irenæus weds it in a manner with the genius of the West, and frees it from Platonist abstraction: this is the special merit and glory of the Gallo-Asiatic school, which is weak on the question of authority. The school of Carthage, which unhappily espouses ardently the cause of episcopal monarchy, fails to hold the advanced ground reached by the bishop of Lyons with regard to the living conception of the Deity, and blends a fierce asceticism with the extreme assertion of the rule of faith. Let us pass rapidly in review the essential points of the Christian doctrine, in order to draw the line between the errors and imperfections which may be buried with the past, and the true and fruitful ideas which may still be of benefit to ourselves.

We recognise at the outset that the ante-Nicene theology was led, by its resistance to Gnostic and naturalistic fatalism, to settle firmly the bases of moral order. All its organs without exception affirm with perfect clearness the free action of God and of man. This is abundantly evident from the passages we have quoted. The idea of arbitrary predestination is purely a doctrine of heresy. Confronted with a

pantheism equally hostile, under all its various disguises, Christian theology felt that it could only gain the battle by remaining strictly faithful to the revelation of conscience. Doubtless, liberty was too often reduced to mere freedom of choice, as in the system of Origen; but Irenæus rises to the conception of positive liberty, which is not merely an act, but a state, and by the trial of the will brings us to the realisation of our true destiny. He admits that man finds his consummation in the divine life by union with the Word. However we may regard this divergence, the motto of all primitive theology is this: "God never uses violence: He only persuades."

The contest with Gnosticism had the further effect of vindicating the unity of God as opposed to dualism. The Alexandrine Fathers established admirably that justice and goodness are not two attributes in opposition, but are inseparable in their action. "Justice is full of goodness, and goodness of justice," says Clement; nor is he controverted by Tertullian, who declares boldly that the essence of God is goodness, and that He is only constrained to severity by our abuse of liberty. Nothing was needed but to deduce the consequences from these principles, in order to arrive at the complete and living conception of the God who is essential love. The Platonist school had still too strong a hold on cultivated minds to allow Christian theodicy to escape its influence, and the moral idea became subordinate to the metaphysical. The Fathers brought up in this school of brilliant speculation, saw in God rather the Ineffable One, the Transcendent Absolute, than the Father who is infinite love. Hence

the defectiveness of their Trinitarian system. The Trinity becomes a necessity in relation to the world; it is not the completion of the Divine life, of the very being of God. If God is love, He must have through all eternity an object to love, and we are thus led to the eternity of the Word as a person. The mystery which overwhelms the reason satisfies the conscience, since it is only the eternal realisation of its highest ideal. Justin, Origen, Hippolytus, Tertullian, Cyprian —all fail to reach this height: thus with most of them the Word has a beginning. He simply precedes creation in order to call it into existence, as the organ of the first principle. The subordination of the Son to the Father, thus understood, becomes so marked that it is hard to maintain with any logical consistency the full divinity of the Word. We are still far from Arianism, however, which makes the Word come forth from nothing; for all the Fathers of that age regard Him as proceeding from God — to use their own expression, as the stream from its source, the ray from the sun. The Council of Nicæa certainly made a great advance in theology by establishing that the Trinity was, not merely contingent on creation, but was an evolution of the Divine life in itself. It was wrong, however, in confining itself too closely within the metaphysical sphere, and in neglecting the great moral idea of love, which implies the eternity of the Son, resting in the bosom of the Father, according to the sublime image of St. John. In direct contradiction, moreover, of the positive teaching of Scripture, it absolutely denied the subordination of the Word, a fact which is perfectly reconcilable with His eternity, since

He is eternally the Son and never the Father. With regard to the personality of the Holy Spirit, we are bound to admit that Christian antiquity was very vague and undecided, and that it often seemed to confound together the second and third persons of the Trinity. This outline of primitive theodicy clearly necessitates a large expansion, if not of our theological conception, at least of our appreciation of theological systems. Even should we still hold the conviction that the eternal divinity of the Word alone suffices to give the true idea of God, it will be impossible for us to exclude from the pale of Christianity all that deviates metaphysically from this point of view; for this would be to involve in the same condemnation the most illustrious representatives of the Church of the martyrs.

Anthropology was one of the glories of the theology of this period, but its depth and breadth caused it to be entirely ignored in the ages which followed. All the Fathers of the second and third centuries, except Arnobius, maintained with a boldness which would be considered scandalous in many sections of the Church of our day, the original relationship between man and God. They were never weary of dilating on the grand saying of Paul to the Athenians, "Ye are the offspring of God." From Justin, who discerns in our higher life the germ of the Word, to Tertullian, who openly avows our true nature to be Divine, none of them hesitate to speak of the divinity of man. They use the word without hesitation. Man's destiny finds its full realisation in God. "First man, then God." This saying of the theologian of Carthage truly represents the thought of all the Fathers. The Word is

the prototype of Adam—the second Adam, that is, the true Adam, not marred by sin, but realising the idea or the ideal of humanity. Such a doctrine, carried to its ultimate consequences, might have produced the broadest and most comprehensive conception of the nature of the Redeemer. Unhappily, many of the Fathers wavered upon this point, and, untrue to their own principle, yielded to the dualising tendency; and so completely separated the man from the God in Christ, that the unity of the person can only be admitted by a mental *tour de force*. Irenæus alone is almost entirely free from this inconsistency; he had already deviated from his predecessors in his conception of God, which was far less of an abstraction than that of Alexandrine Platonism, since the first principle in his view is eternal love. We have quoted at some length the admirable passages in which he shows us in the incarnate Word the perfect man—the very man whom God had in view in creation. He truly humbled Himself to us, in order to raise us to Himself. *Homo factus est ut nos assuesceret fieri Dei.* The dogma of the two natures finds no place in his theology, which cannot be too highly commended to the study of our contemporaries.

We have seen that redemption is for the most part stated in a very incomplete manner in the systems of this period, although it is never reduced to a mere declaration pure and simple of the divine love. All the ante-Nicene Fathers allow that the restoration of humanity requires a positive act of reparation, a sacrifice, but none of them has an adequate apprehension of the awful depths of evil. They affirm the fact of the Fall, without

sufficiently recognising the extent of its ravages. They are indeed right in their unanimous rejection of the false and exaggerated idea of the total corruption of human nature; and yet, in spite of his doctrinal extravagances, St. Augustine will accomplish a very necessary task, when, two centuries later, he grapples closely with this large and melancholy theme. The idea of a ransom paid to Satan, which was chiefly developed by Origen, bears evident traces of Gnostic origin. Divine justice is not recognised in all its claims. If the theology of the second and third centuries rejects by all its organs the inadmissible theory of a strictly judicial satisfaction, which makes the curse of God to alight directly upon the innocent head of the Crucified, it at the same time fails to recognise the full scope and the deep necessity of the reparative sacrifice, with the exception indeed of Irenæus, who on this point, as on many others, is the most faithful inheritor of apostolic teaching. He insists, with much force, upon the necessity of a retractation of the primeval rebellion, by a perfect obedience even unto death. But these grand thoughts were but imperfectly developed, and come down to us in a more or less fragmentary form. Evidently succeeding ages had an important mission to fulfil in this respect. Irenæus and Clement of Alexandria needed to be supplemented by Augustine and Anselm, while we ourselves shall do well to retain the element of truth found in each theory. It remained for the Reformation of the sixteenth century to extirpate from primitive theology all the false notions as to works of merit and expiation which had crept into it; not failing at the same time to maintain, in opposition to the vehement reaction of Cal-

vinism, that assertion of liberty which the ante-Nicene Fathers uttered with one voice.

That which cannot be too highly commended is the noble spirituality of this great epoch in the religious life. The narrow Sabbatarianism which has played so large a part in Protestant piety is completely foreign to it. It does not allow that the Sunday has been substituted for the Sabbath, though it lays much stress on the celebration of the Christian feast. It does not believe in the necessity of a sanctuary any more than in that of a day of greater holiness than the rest. If it wavers upon the notion of the priesthood, we may make the same apology for it as for Irenæus, who is the first to give expression to the idea of the apostolic succession in the episcopate, and who is led to entertain that view under the double pressure of persecution and heresy. Neither Justin, Clement, nor Origen teaches anything of the sort. We shall see in the sequel of this history how prolonged and fierce was the conflict for the liberty of the Church. The sacraments are variously understood; it is difficult indeed to derive any distinct and definite idea from the mystical language employed with regard to them. Nowhere however do we find the exact idea of a magical transformation of the eucharistic elements, and many declarations having a contrary tendency may be cited.

As to the method to be pursued in the determination of religious truth, the opinions are very various. Holy Scripture preserves its pre-eminence; inspiration is generally understood in its most rigorous sense, although statements are found in all the Fathers not easily to be reconciled with such a theory. They are almost

all agreed in recognising an enlarged measure of inspiration in the New Testament. Irenæus considers that the exclusive gift of prophecy terminated with Christ: its object was to accustom man to bear the Divine Spirit within. The canon of the sacred writings is not defined with any fixity. The Apocryphal Gospels, the "Letter to Barnabas," and the "Pastor Hermas," are constantly quoted like the Gospels and Epistles. Oral tradition is appealed to by Irenæus. He deems that by its aid he can go back to the teaching of the apostles; and he argues that the faithful memory of that teaching is to be sought only in the Churches founded by them. Upon this point, however, there are notable diversities of opinion. While Clement of Alexandria enjoins the patient labour of religious thought, and does not fear the inevitable differences of opinion sure to arise from such a study, Tertullian in his treatise, "De Prescriptiones," seeks to cut short all inquiry, and bequeaths to his episcopal disciple, Cyprian, the charge of completing his work, and of teaching the reason to bow before the majestic unity of the visible Church, which lacks as yet, however, the crown of the pontificate. Everything proclaims the advent of a new order of things. We must be careful, however, not to antedate it, by confounding its preparation with its consummation. The general characteristics of the theology of the second and third centuries are still liberty and diversity upon the common ground of a living faith in Christ.

After thus indicating that which appears to us suggestive and helpful in this theology, and pointing out also that which is in our view faulty and obsolete, it only re-

mains for us to leave this great history to convey its own lessons to the Christian thought of our day, by showing the dangers to be avoided, and the precious veins to be worked. The first practical lesson it will teach is this —to repudiate alike the religious radicalism which denies revelation, and the narrow orthodoxy which insists on the acceptance of its own interpretations. In truth, neither the one tendency nor the other finds any sanction in the heroic Church, which was wise enough to encounter fundamental errors with the simple weapon of free discussion, and to vindicate the legitimate independence of the human mind by the very variety of its schools and its formularies.

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